

Baker (William) and Howe (John) K

A
VINDICATION
OF THE

Divine Perfections,

Illustrating the

Glozy of God

In Them,

By Reason and Revelation:

Methodically Digested into several

MEDITATIONS.

Lord By a Person of Honour. Scire

L O N D O N,

Printed by J. D. for Brabazon Aylmer, at the
Three Pigeons in Cornhill. MDCXC V.

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Bates / William / and Howe / John / &c

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The PREFACE.

THE essential and absolute Perfections of which the Deity is possesst for ever, are the Object of our supream Reverence and Adoration, Love and Joy, Affiance and Trust. The comprehensive Knowledge of them infinitely exceeds our finite Faculties: but their Discovery is of God, which is of gradual Accomplishment according to our Conceptions and Capacities, and in order to our transforming Contemplation of him in his imitable Excellencies. The Light of Reason (like the early Morning when the Shadows of the Night are mix'd with the Light of the Day) affords some glimmering Notices, and scattered Glances of the Divine Essence and Attributes. The Light of Faith (like the ascending Light of the Sun that dispels the Mists in the Air) gives a

more clear and extensive Discovery. The Light of Glory (like the Sun in its full Lustre) reveals them in the most resplendent manner.

In the whole Frame of Nature, in the Variety and Union of its Parts, in their Order and Efficacy, the Wisdom, Power and Goodness of the Divine Maker appear, or rather shine: his Attributes and Excellencies are visibly signed and engraven on his Works. But since the Revolt and Ruine of Man, the Understanding is strangely darkned and disordered in its Operations. Of this there is sad Evidence in the numberless Errors that swarm'd in the World concerning God: The Heathen Notions of him were in such a degree of Deformity, as infinitely blasphem'd his Nature. It will be sufficient to mention one fundamental Error. To the enlightned Mind the Divine Perfections carry their Evidence in a Circle, one Attribute illustrates and strongly infers another: yet they could not conceive the absolute Perfection of God's Nature, but fancied every Attribute to be a singular

The PREFACE.

v

singular Deity. These portentous Mistakes did not proceed from the Defect of Visibility in the Object, but of Sight in the Eye of Reason, so weakned and vitiated in our lapsed State.

It pleased therefore the Father of Lights in his admirable Mercy, to afford a new Revelation of himself to the Minds of Men. The same Heavenly Inspiration from whence the reasonable Soul proceeds, was requisite to renew the true Knowledge of God in it. The sacred Scripture is the Medium of this Revelation, wherein are such Characters of the Deity, that none but a perverse Mind can suspect it not to be the Word of God. In that Glass his most Divine Perfections are revealed: Wisdom, Goodness, Holiness, Justice, that are principally exercised in the Moral Government of the World. The external Revelation of God's Nature and compassionate Counsels in the Gospel, when productive of an inward Revelation to the Mind, so powerful as to regulate the Will and Affections, is of saving Efficacy.
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The wise Men with the Direction of a miraculous Star had internal Illumination, that discovered the Incarnate Son of God and Saviour of the World to them.

The Light of Faith is as much below the Light of Glory, as 'tis above the Light of Nature. Now the Manifestation of God is temper'd to our frail Faculties: if his transcendent Excellencies were display'd to us, we should be swallowed up in Extasy and Astonishment. But in the future State where the Natural Body shall be spiritualized, we shall know as we are known. In Heaven God shines by direct Beams; the clear and uninterrupted Vision of his Glory, is the Cause and Consummation of the Felicity of Angels and Saints for ever. We begin our Heaven here, by the attentive and transforming Contemplation of the Deity.

The Noble Author of the following Discourses, has obliged the wise and inquiring Christians by communicating his Treasures. The Clearness and Vigor of his Spirit, are illustriously visible in managing a
Subject

The PREFACE. vii

Subject so deep and difficult. And as in the blessed God there is a Union of all glorious and amiable Excellencies as are perfective of our Minds, and attractive of our Wills ; so in our Author's unfolding them, there is joined with the strength of Argument, that Beauty of Persuasion, as may enlighten and engage all understanding Readers to be happy in the entire Choice of God for their everlasting Portion.

*We have here an imitable and instructive Example to Great Men, the Dignity of whose Stations in the World too commonly seems to plead an Exemption from a more sedulous Intention and Application of Mind to the Affairs of Religion, that have final Reference to another World. This Performance of the Noble Author shows it to be a thing not impracticable, as it is most Praise-worthy, amidst the greatest secular Employments to find Vacancy and a Disposition of Spirit to look with a very inquisitive Eye into the deep Things of God: Which (if it were the Author's Pleasure to be known) would
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let it be seen the Statesman and the Divine are not Inconsistencies to a great and comprehensive Mind; so as to consider them with Distinction, and without confounding them, or making the two Spheres intersect one another; so as that in so large a Theological Work, here is no mixture of Political Matters, except wherein the Nature of the things themselves they are contiguous. And were it not so, or if this Work concern'd Policies and Governments by Men, it were without our Compass to recommend it to the World. Which having had some Taste of it, we make so much haste to do, as not to allow our selves the Pleasure of engrossing it, or of perusing it alone, till we have imparted it and made it possible to others to partake with us therein.

W. BATES.

J. HOWE.

THE

THE CONTENTS.

	Page
Meditation I. I ntroductory.	I
II. Upon God's being a Spirit.	19
III. Upon the Self-existence and Eternity of God.	28
IV. Upon God's Omniscience.	36
V. Upon the Will and Pleasure of God.	67
VI. Upon the Power of God.	78
VII. Upon the Oneness of God.	89
VIII. Upon God's Freedom.	140
IX. Upon the Blessedness of God, implying his Self-sufficiency, Self-comprehension, his infinite Love to, and Delight in Himself.	118
X. Upon God's Holiness or Godlikeness.	126
XI. Upon	

The CONTENTS.

	Page
XI. <i>Upon the Unchangeableness of God.</i>	141
XII. <i>Upon the Goodness of God.</i>	150
XIII. <i>Upon the Truth of God.</i>	168
XIV. <i>Upon the Justice of God.</i>	179
XV. <i>Upon the Mercy of God.</i>	200
XVI. <i>Upon the Faithfulness of God.</i>	213
XVII. <i>Upon the Wisdom of God.</i>	224
XVIII. <i>Upon the Dominion of God, and his Dispensations thereof towards his Rational Creatures, especially by the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace.</i>	257

MEDI-

MEDITATION I.

Introductory.

The greatest Duty of Man towards God is to delight in God as in the most excellent and most amiable Object: It is also the highest Accomplishment of Man's Happiness; for by delighting in God he doth enjoy him. Delight can only arise from the Knowledge of the lovely Object in the Perfections thereof: And according to the measure of the Distinctness of the Object, is the Degree of the Delight in it. It will not be sufficient to rest in the general Knowledge of God, that he is endowed with all possible consistent Perfections, but there ought to be a diligent Search of the several Divine Perfections, in that Order that the Mind of Man can best apprehend them: For who can search the Almighty to Perfection?

IT is the most common and uncontroverted Sentiment of Mankind, that every Man feels in himself an earnest and stedfast Inclination to promote his own Well-being to his full Satisfaction, which alone can justly be called his Happiness, and must comprehend not only the

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having of all things that might do him good, but the Certainty that they shall not be taken from him. This natural Inclination is a perpetual Monitor to put him in mind to consider what things may be for his Good, and in what way he may retain or attain them ; and though Men be frequently mistaken in the Application, in the Matter or Manner of their own Good, yet they do ever desire, and (if there be a Probability of Attainment) endeavour after that which they apprehend to be for their own Happiness ; which is excellently set forth by the Psalmist, *There be many that say, Who will shew us any Good? Lord, lift thou up the Light of thy Countenance upon us : Thou hast put Gladness in my Heart more than in the time that their Corn and their Wine increased :* Insinuating, that the most common Apprehension of Happiness is the Increase of Corn and Wine, and the Joy arising from the Accommodations of an animal Life, expressed by Corn and Wine, which are the prime Means of that Injoyment.

2. But declaring, also, his own Sentiment, which is true Happiness, the Joy arising from the shining of God's Countenance, that is, the evident Favour of God : for Favour is chiefly indicated by the Countenance, as well as Aversion by Discountenance ; and the shining of God's Countenance signifies the highest Favour, which is the Fountain of Happiness and all Goodness requisite thereto, absolutely secured by God's Unchangeableness. The Countenance of Man is the chief Seat of his Beauty and Loveliness, and therefore fittest to represent the Amiability of God, arising from the clear Perception and Attention of his infinite Perfections, exciting an unparallelable Delight : So then

then Man's Happiness is the Joy arising from such a State as can never want the shining of God's Countenance: but the Means to attain that State are not so obvious; the finding them requires the most serious and diligent Meditations; for therein the greatest Wits of the World, though not seduced with the Bias of Self-Interest (that State being the greatest Self-Interest) have yet grossly erred herein; so that there are hundreds of opposite Opinions of Philosophers wherein Happiness doth consist.

3. The Favour and shining of the Countenance of God cannot be upon any other State of Man than that which is pleasing and acceptable to God, which cannot be without a sufficient measure of the Knowledge of God: *For he that cometh to God, must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.* Which seeking him must be an Endeavour to know his Divine Perfections, more than by knowing that he is, by knowing what he is, wherein the believing that he is a Rewarder of those that believe in him is specially express'd, as of the chiefest Moment; as it is immediately subjoined, *Without Faith it is impossible to please God.* Which Faith is not only that contemplative Faith whereby the Faithfulness of God is known, that is, that excellent Perfection of his Nature, that he will not disappoint the Hope or Trust of a Creature created after his own Image, in what is worthy of him to give, and is fit for them to have, but that actual Trust and Hope for Pardon, Reconciliation and Glory, in that way which is suitable to God, which cannot be to those that hate him, condemn or neglect him, or that cleave to their Sins, which he doth abhor, or to those who do not

love him above all things, and from Love have not only a tender Fear and Reverence to do nothing that may offend him, but an earnest Desire and Endeavour to do all things for his Glory; which is the Manifestation of his Divine Perfections, devoting the Soul unto him, in endeavouring to do all things that are pleasant and acceptable in his Sight: *This is that true Holiness, without which it is impossible to see God*; which by equivalent Terms is called Godliness, Piety and Devotion.

4. That Favour of God which is manifested by the shining of his Countenance, is not in his Love of Benevolence or good Will, which he had in Election, and still hath before Conversion, but in that Love of Beneplacence or Delight, which he hath not till Conversion; nor doth his Countenance always shine after it, but he frowns upon the commission of presumptuous Sins, until they be repented of and pardoned.

5. The Scripture makes a clear Distinction and Difference between Godliness and Honesty, which in equivalent Terms is made betwixt Piety and Probity; the same may be an Act of either, or of both, or of neither: whereof the Scripture giveth a clear Instance, in giving Alms to the Poor, which some may give upon the Interest of Mankind, in compassion of the Miserable, without considering it as pleasing to God; and then it is an Act of Honesty and Probity, but no Act of Godliness or Piety. Others may give it, because it is acceptable to God, without considering the Interest of Man, and then it is an Act of Piety only. Others may give it upon both Accounts in their due Subordination, and then it is an Act both of Godliness and Honesty. And others may give it out of
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Vain-glory to be seen of Men, and then it is an Act of neither.

Piety is called Religion *à religando*, from tying or binding again the Soul to God; and is also called Devotion *à devovendo*, from vowing or consecrating the Soul from common Use to God; and so all things consecrated are said to be holy, being separated from common Use as to their chief Use, without excluding consisting subordinate Uses.

6. The necessary and chief Acts of Religion and Devotion, are Confidence in God, and Love to God. Faith and Love are the Fountain-Graces from whence the rest flow; neither of them are attainable without the Knowledge and Consideration of their proper Objects, so qualified as may excite these Affections, which must be by the Perfections in the Object on which these Affections lay hold, and by which they are mov'd.

7. Faith is described, ἐλπίζομένων ὑπόσχεσις, which is best rendred, *the Subsistence of things hoped for*; and so the same Act is Faith, as the Promise or Faithfulness of God is present, and Hope as the Performance is expected: The proper Object of both is Faithfulness of the Person trusted, upon knowledg that he is able and willing, at least by the Generosity of his Nature, whereby he will not disappoint a sutable Expectation, and the Degree thereof is according to these Qualities. None but a Fool can trust upon other Terms, nor further trust than he knows them: The very having of Trust is a powerful Motive to a generous Mind, no less effectual than the strongest Ingagement of another.

Love, or Complacence, cannot be excited but by the Advertence and Consideration of an amia-

ble Object, nor further than the Perfections of that Object can bear. There is indeed a natural Affection that results from the Knowledg of Relations, of Parents and Children, Brothers and Sisters, given by God, like to natural Instincts abstracted from the Nature of the Object: But there is a different Love even in those, in relation, and in proportion to the Perfections of the Object.

These Affections of Hope and Love are not directly in our Power, but indirectly, by the attending and considering proper Objects thereof: Neither is Delight or Pleasure directly in our Power, but by Attention of the Perfections that move the same: Neither yet Grief, which is opposite to Pleasure, without adverting and attending the Qualities in the Object from whence Grief ariseth.

Any Man of common Capacity, who will take leisure to use ordinary Diligence in observing and reflecting upon the Workings of his own Soul, will be convinced that he cannot excite Joy at his Desire, but only by the Perception of particular Objects, adverting these things in them, which his Judgment cannot but acknowledg to be good, whence he will find Pleasure to result; and thence there will follow an Inclination of his Will, wishing the Improvement of that Good towards the Object it self, or towards another. None but a Sot or a Fool would at any time want the greatest Pleasure, if the willing or wishing it could afford it; for it is as easy to wish the greatest as the least: but he can no more attain Pleasure by willing it, than he can in the Dark attain Light by wishing it. There must be an Object fit to raise Pleasure, perceived by the Sense or Imagination, which thence is called sensible Pleasure; or if morally, evil sensual

sual Pleasure ; or perceived by the Understanding, which thence is called intellectual Pleasure, more proper to Man. In like manner Grief is never excited but by application of a hurtful Object to the Sense, Fancy, Judgment, or Memory. And thence follows Aversion.

8. The chief Difference between Men and Brutes in these is, that Brutes act by Instinct without Freedom in their Appetites or Aversions, but Man can turn an Object from his Sense, or his Sense from an Object, as he would shun hurtful Pleasure or Grief ; or if he cannot so do, he can apply his Mind to think upon an Object fit to excite Joy or Grief, and avert his Thought from the former Object, and so either extinguish or abate the Pleasure or Grief arising from it, or may shun the perception of it, or thinking upon it, wherein chiefly the Freedom of Man doth consist.

Joy and Grief are contrary, and therefore according to the common Nature of Contraries, the one expels the other, and they cannot both be together in the Soul in the highest Degree, but in lower Degrees they may consist ; and tho they do not totally expel one another, yet they do it in part, and so abate one another. It is evident by common Experience, that an intellectual Pleasure may consist with a sensible Pain : He who causeth a Leg or Arm to be cut off, or a Wound to be lanced, feeleth a great Pain ; yet if he be so wise as to keep his Thought firm upon the great Benefit he receives thereby, there will arise an intellectual Pleasure, that will abate and may mitigate the Pain : as if a wounded Man were out of hope of Cure because no Physician could be found, and by surprize there comes one who gives Assurance

of Life, and lances the Wound. With how much Pleasure will one endure the Pain by setting right and binding up a broken Leg by the Thought of avoiding Lameness, and having the Use of so necessary a Member? The most eminent Example of this, the Scripture shews of our Saviour, *who for the Joy was set before him, endured the Cross, despising the Shame.* How have some noble Greeks and Romans gloried to become a Sacrifice for the Safety of their Country? The Apostles, who were unjustly scourged, and thereby had the Grief of Pain and Shame, yet *rejoiced to be counted worthy to suffer for the Name of Christ.* Even many Martyrs have triumphed and joyfully sung in the midst of the Flames, consuming their Bodies. It is an Evidence of a weak or vitiated Mind, that by frequent application of the Thoughts to one main Object, doth acquire such an habitual Pleasure therein, that it cannot direct its Thoughts towards another more noble Object.

If God had not endued Man with this Liberty, he would not have commanded that special and signal Love of married Persons, which oftentimes could be no other way performed but by frequent Meditation upon their Perfections, and diverting the Thoughts from thinking upon their Imperfections, or from thinking of the Perfections of others that might excite Desire after them. Thus Job said, *I have made a Covenant with my Eyes, why then should I look upon a Maid?* Yea, God would not have commanded Man to love God with all his Soul, and with all his Strength, if he did not give him Capacity to know and meditate upon his infinite Perfections; much less would he punish Man for failing in these.

It may be objected, that the Objects of Thought are innumerable, no Creature can retain them all in its Mind, nor can determine it self to think on every Object at Pleasure, but is ordinarily determined by some Impression upon the Mind; how then can the Mind turn to the fitted Object to shun hurtful Pleasure or Grief? Certainly a great part of the governing of Man is by determining his Thoughts to particular Objects: the Mind's reflecting on its own Working and Experience, will solve this Difficulty, and will find that some things will frequently and almost continually recur to the Thoughts: and above all, the Mind can always recur to the Thoughts of God, wherein if it be not perverted to shun the continuance of these Thoughts, it cannot miss some measure of Cure against any hurtful Pleasure or Grief: A hurtful Pleasure may be shunn'd, by exciting a more noble Pleasure in another Object, or by exciting Grief from thinking upon the Consequences of that hurtful Pleasure.

I needed think no more to convince me of the excellent Usefulness for Devotion, arising from the distinct and frequent meditating upon the Divine Perfections, which would continually excite Joy, and will never want Matter of new Discoveries of Perfection, in Kind or Degree, Power or Act; and so give new, fresh and increased Pleasure: that though in the State of Mortality Man knoweth God both darkly and as in a Glass, that is, by Reflection from his Creatures; yet *at his right Hand there is Fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore*, that is, in the State of Glory. But there may be, even here, so much Joy from meditating upon God, which all other Objects cannot parallel,

rallel, much less exceed or extinguish.

9. The Scripture doth frequently inculcate the Benefit of knowing God, of remembring him, of meditating upon his Perfections, his Laws and Dispensations; and gives it as the Character of the Wicked, that they know not God, that they remember not God, that *they have him not before their Eyes, whom to know is Life everlasting: This is Life eternal, to know God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.* The Knowledge of God cannot formally be Life eternal, but it is the Mean necessary to attain it, because it doth excite that Joy in which it doth chiefly consist. It is said of the Wicked, that God is not in all their Thoughts; that is, so far as they can shun; and that they will have no Thoughts of the most High; the Thoughts of God crush their sinful Inclinations and Pleasures, which fall before them, as *Dagon* did before the Ark of God. *Job* gives it as a discriminating Test, between the Godly and the Hypocrite, only knowable by every Man of himself, when he says of the Hypocrite, *Will he delight himself in the Almighty? Will he always call upon God?*

10. There is a Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, by Acquisition, in Improvement of the Light of Nature; and Experience, by Revelation of that which hath no Principle in the Light of Nature, by spiritual Illumination, *whereby spiritual things are discernable, which the natural Man cannot know, because they are spiritually discerned;* and his Notions of them are but as those of a Country from a Map: and according to these several kinds of Knowledge must the different kinds of Meditation, and the different Degrees of Joy, Love, Reverence, Obsequiousness and Confidence in God arise,

arise, and the true Humility of the Soul of Man, not so much by debasing it below its true Value, but by exalting God, and perceiving the Infinite Distance of Perfection betwixt the two, which may equally be between two Objects, by heightning the one, or by depressing the other.

The Monkish Humility is much in disgracing humane Nature, which is not without reflecting upon its Author, and doth not only loath humane Nature in so far as sinful. The Stoicks fall into the like Fault, by looking upon all Affections as vicious Perturbations, not endeavouring to rule and use them, but to root them out: as if a Horse should not be made use of, because some ill-managed Horse will kick off his Master, or break his Bridle and run away; or, as if a Sail should not be used, because sometimes it oversets a Ship. Indeed, weak or vitiated Minds were better if they wanted all Affections to be their Servants, than having them to be their Masters.

11. The natural Knowledg of God improved by Industry and Experience, goeth a great way even in Religion: for the Light of the natural Conscience convinceth a Man that there is one, and only one God, who is the just Judg of all rational Creatures, and knoweth their most secret Thoughts, and that he rules them and the whole World; and that they find in their Souls a Rule of their Life, a Quiet and Pleasure in their Conscience when they keep it, and a Terror when they break it; yea, they have the natural Notion of the Mercy and Forgiveness of God to penitent Sinners, and they think that every Man can repent if he please: but they are utterly confounded, and at a loss, when they consider the Consistency of the Justice
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and Mercy of God, how all might repent, and all be forgiven, and yet that God is entirely just, and fully abhors Sin. The Entry of Reveald Religion discovering a Messias or Mediator, delivering his People from their Sins by his Sufferings, is no small Confirmation of the Truth of that Religion, inducing a strong Probability of it, though nothing but the Divine Illumination can breed a full Perswasion of it, nor give Warrant to force the embracing and professing it, as may be done for the Light and Law of Nature, as well for Religion, as far as it goes, as for other Ends.

Something of Religion will arise from the Notion of a Deity, convincing that God is to be adored by Acknowledgment of his Power, Bounty, Justice and Mercy; by Supplication for his Favour, and the Requisites of Life; by Deprecations of his Displeasure, Justice and Wrath; Praise and Thanksgiving for Benefits received or hoped. Much more will result from the improved Knowledge of God by the Light of Nature, and yet more by the Probability of his revealed Will. Whereby it cannot but be acknowledged, that if these things be true which are contained in Scripture, God's Bounty and Mercy to Mankind is far greater than what could be dreamed of from the Light of Nature.

But all this is far short of the Knowledge arising from the Illumination of the Holy Spirit, in the Souls of the Regenerate, by which they are capable of a far more glorious and firm Apprehension of the Divine Perfections and Dispensations, and a quite other and far greater Joy therein, and in the Perswasion of Peace and Reconciliation with God, and in the *Hope of that Glory which is greater than*
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Ear hath heard, or Eye hath seen, or hath entred into the Heart of Man to consider.

12. The Knowledge of God, even in the Renewed, hath great Variety of Degrees; and it is both the Interest and Duty of all of them, to extend it so far as their Capacity and Opportunities do enable them, that they may increase their Comfort, and strengthen their Faith against the Suggestions of Satan, and the Seductions of weak or wicked Men misrepresenting God, not so much in his Power and Wisdom as in his Goodness and Purity, whereby they do exceedingly incroach upon that Infinite Loveliness whereby he draws and ravishes the Souls of Men, and doth not only drive them by the Power of his Sovereignty.

Some represent God as if his Sovereignty were his highest Perfection, and his greatest Interest, as despotick Sovereigns represent themselves to be above all Law, and to be indifferent whom to save, or whom to destroy, without any consideration of their Actings, but to shew their absolute and arbitrary Power, and that they neither love their Subjects, nor care for the Love of their Subjects, but for their Fear, that may make them obey without Reserve. How strange is it that so many eminent Divines should represent God, as if the Order of his Decrees were not only to glorify some, and not for their foreseen Performances by their own Power, but to eternally torment the greatest part of his rational Creatures, without the consideration of their Sin, as coming in not as a Motive from the Foresight thereof, but as a Mean to that End. Others are amaz'd when they consider the Goodness of God, why infinite Duration pass'd before he created any Creature, why he created
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not more Individuals, more Kinds, more excellent Perfections; why he suffered Sin to come into the World; why he saved so few; and permits the Devils to tempt. And therefore upon pretence to vindicate the Purity, and magnify the Goodness of God, they represent him as having done all that was possible for him to do, especially in relation to his rational Creatures, who could not possibly be created with Reason and free Choice; so that he could in all Cases effectually over-rule them, by hindring them to do Evil, or make them to do Good; but that he could only perswade them, and bring into their Thoughts and Remembrance the best Motives; yet so as they could reject them all, and choose the contrary; at least that he had decreed to have no farther Influence on them but by Perswasion, wherein they fortify themselves by God's Intreaties and Expostulations, and by his exprefs Declaration, *What could I have done more for my Vineyard that I have not done?* This doth no less derogate from the Power and Wisdom of God, than the former does from his Goodness and Justice. There are innumerable other Mistakes, yea and pernicious Errors, prejudicial to the Amiableness and Perfection of God.

It is not proper here to vindicate the Divine Perfections against these Errors, but in the Explication of the particular Perfections on which they inroach. I shall only in general observe how these Opinions can subsist with the common Conception of God, unto which all that use unprejudicate Reason do agree, that he is a Being absolutely perfect; that the Mind of Man could not conceive him more perfect than he is, and consequently more amiable, if that he acted by absolute

lute Necessity. It were easy to conceive him more perfect, if in his Intentions, Purposes and Performances, he acted freely. It is an inbred Principle in the Soul of Man, that nothing can be morally good, vertuous or praise-worthy, that is done of necessity, and not freely; and therefore the Light of Nature, as well as Revelation, do represent the Divine Intentions and Actings as free, not by the Freedom of Indifference, but that there was Sufficiency of Power and Strength in God to have done otherways, or to do any thing that doth not import Inconsistency with it self, which only is absolutely impossible. But there is another kind of Impossibility, not absolute by Inconsistency, but eventually impossible: For Example, that all Mankind should be of one Opinion: Suppose a Man to aim and shoot at a Mark, and hit it at a great Distance, it hath no Inconsistency that the same Man with the same Instruments should ever hit that Mark, and yet eventually it is impossible. So it is said, that *it is impossible for God to lie*; and that he hath done all that he could do for his Vineyard. The Meaning whereof is not because of his Decree and Immutability, for so all things are impossible to be otherwise than they are, but because God will never do any thing not worthy of, and becoming his infinitely glorious natural Perfections.

It was in the Power of God, and not inconsistent, that he should have given his rational Creatures such Inclinations as they could not possibly act contrary thereto: wherein he has convinced us that it is impossible for rational Creatures to choose but under the Notion of some kind of Goodness; and that it is impossible for them to desire that
which

which they conceive would be their own Misery, or not to desire their own Happiness when they think upon it: but he hath never proposed a Reward for such Acts, because they proceed like the Instincts of Brutes, which may do things naturally good as well as naturally evil, but are not capable of Punishment or of Reward, because they have not Freedom.

God hath also given to Mankind the natural Affection to love their Children, distinct from that Love which ariseth from their Perfections: This Inclination is very strong, yet some do counteract it, and thereby their Crimes are most horrid, but their Rewards are least in the Sight of God or of Men. These Actions are most praise-worthy, whereby the contrary strong Inclinations are overcome, as to hazard Life without rational Hope of Escape, for the Good of a Country or City to lay it down, when Escape is impossible, and yet a contrary Word would save it; upon Love and Obedience to God, as the Martyrs have suffered the most cruel Death, when a contrary Acknowledgment would both have given Life and Reward.

13. When therefore I consider and compare these two Ways that were both possible and good, that God should have created all his rational Creatures with such Inclinations that they could not counteract, and thereby were neither capable of Punishment nor Reward, not having any Freedom: or that he should create them with sufficient inbred Principles and Inclinations to Good, not of necessity but of free Choice, and which they could counteract, and so did govern them by Rewards and Punishments. I am convinced as clearly as of the Light, that in this way Creatures were
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more like to their Creator, and that his Choice was more suitable, worthy of, and becoming his infinitely glorious Nature, than the former way. Nor do I think that the confirmed Angels or glorious Saints are in an absolute Impossibility to counteract their Inclinations: God so assists them in all their Choices, that it is only eventually impossible; as our Saviour encouraged his Apostles, not to be anxious what to say when they were brought before Judges, for it should be given them what to say in that Hour: Therefore both Angels and Men were at first created in a State of Innocence and Holiness, but mutable, for after-Proof of their Faithfulness and Diligence. God did confirm the elect Angels by greater Grace than the rest; and the first Man and Woman did fall freely, and by no Necessity imposed either by the Decree or Dispensation of God. How foolish then is it to imagine, that God who stood in need of no Creature, would create such Creatures, as either by the Necessity of their Nature, or by his Decree he could not govern, but only persuade, request and expostulate. A Supposition little agreeable to *that* of his Fore-knowledg, or the Use he might make of it. I see no Difficulty that he could foresee what they would do, if left to themselves: But seeing he could hinder and prevent whatever he foresaw that were inconsistent with his Glory, and that he could inable and excite them to whatever he pleased that were good, I see no more necessary for governing them, and for glorifying himself.

It is more foolish and faulty to murmur that God hath thus created his rational Creatures, and so not excluded Sin from entering into the World;

or that he design'd and performed the Creation and Providence of the World as he did, without making more Kinds or Individuals, or sooner But as he put to Silence the clamorous Labourers in the Vineyard, that he had given as much to those that laboured but one Hour as to those that laboured a whole Day, saying, *Why are you evil, because I am good? Is it not free for me to do with my own what I please?* But the Folly of this Pretence I see further cleared, that it was not possible to evade it: for though he should have made a Million of Worlds, and far more perfect than this; yet still he could have made more, and more perfect, otherwise his Omnipotence had been exhausted, and his Power as well as his Freedom behov'd to cease. Besides that, Revelation shows the Design of glorifying Man by the Mediator Christ. It had been exceedingly unsuitable to his Merit, that a Part of glorified Men should have owed nothing to him; and so he ought either to have suffered in every Habitation of Mankind, or they ought all to be in one Habitation, and of one Nature and Blood, of both which he was Partaker.

My Design is to clear up to my self the Divine Perfections, and thence to exalt the Loveliness of God, and to vindicate the same against these and other Errors and Mistakes, by methodical Meditations thereupon, according to the natural Order of the Divine Perfections, which Order doth very much contribute to distinct Conceptions of them all.

The Divine Perfections are either natural and absolutely necessary, or voluntary, free, and moral: And though they be without all Composition in the fullest Simplicity, yet they must necessarily be

be conceived by Creatures, as some being prior and others being posterior in order of Nature ; the Divine Dispensations must be posterior even in time to his Purposes or Decrees ; his Decrees being free, must presuppose his Freedom, and his Will ; and these must presuppose his Understanding and Wisdom, and all must be conceived as into, or from a Subject, to which they are relative. His moral Perfections must relate to his natural Perfections, as being prior in order of Nature, that he intends and acts all things futable to, worthy of, and becoming such natural Perfections, and therefore the best Method in meditating upon them, is by following their natural Order.

MEDITATION II.

Upon God's being a Spirit.

1. **G**OD's being a Spirit is the only Attribute of God, that presupposeth nothing anterior. Being a Spirit is the Subject of all the Divine Attributes ; for the being God doth essentially comprehend all. God's Self-existence importeth something that is Self-existent, which is his being a Spirit, so doth his Independance, his Knowledg, his Will, his Freedom : All run up to bring us to consider him as a Spirit. We must not consider the Divine Attributes as different Parts of the Divine Nature, which were inconsistent with a Spirit, which is without all Parts, Extension or Composition ; so that God is altogether Immaterial,

hath none of the Properties of a Body, in whom there is neither Matter nor Form, Parts essential or integral, which is an incommunicable Property of God. It is also incommunicable, that there are no Accidents in him, he acteth all Things immediately without a superadded Power or Capacity, of which no Creature is capable. For it's inconceivable that one Creature should act one way, and another another way, without superadded Powers freely given of God: for if any Creature acted, in that it is a Creature, or as a Creature, then all Creatures behoved so to act; or if it act as a Substance, a Spirit, or a Body, then all Spirits, all Bodies, behoved so to act.

2. God's acting without a superadded Power, without any accession to his Substance, is his incommunicable Perfection, implied in all his Divine Perfections; neither doth it follow that other Spirits must so act, as Angels, or the Souls of Men, for they are only analogous Spirits, by resemblance, there is no synonymous degree of Nature common to Finite and Infinite, God and Creatures, otherwise that Inference were inevitable: Substance and *Ens* are but abstracted metaphysical Notions, and there are no Individuals immediate to these, as there are in Man and to the several Species of Brutes.

Some to avoid this difficulty, have supposed the Angels not to be pure Spirits, but to have aerial or ætherial Bodies, so thin as to be insensible, and that pass through the Pores of all solid Bodies, which the Air cannot do: but then the separate Souls of Men should be pure Spirits; yet some have thought that even then they have aerial or ætherial Bodies:

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but certainly the Angels and Souls of Men by the Power of God were separable from such Bodies, and yet active, and so the immediate actings of God as a Spirit, should be competent to these Spirits.

I know no other way to extricate that Difficulty, but that there is nothing purely Spirit but God; and therefore Angels and Souls, tho they have not Extension and Bulk, as Bodies, yet they have not that Property that they can co-exist with any other created Substance in the same space; so that the Essence of a Body consisteth not in Impenetrability, but in Extension, and God alone can co-exist with all created Substances.

This is much confirmed by the chief and most express place in Scripture, where God is said to be a Spirit, *John 4. 24.* πνεῦμα ὁ θεός, which tho it be rendered, *God is a Spirit*, the Words are, *a Spirit the God*: And in Scripture Indefinites are equivalent to Universals. This way of expression is not to be supposed an accidental Conversion, without a very convincing Reason, neither is there in it a Copulative, but the words are placed as two *Synonyma*, a Spirit, and God, being one thing: The Article ὁ doth not import that God is the Subject, and a Spirit is the Attribute; but a true Spirit is the God, excluding all false Gods, and others, that are by participation called Gods; as in the demonstration of the true God by *Elijah*, the People being fully convinced, cry out, *Jehovah is the God*; that is, the only God. The Name of God is comprehensive of all his Perfections, from which that conception or Idea doth arise, so that it would not be eminently significant to say, that Being that hath all possible Perfection is a Spirit, but rather a true Spirit must have in it all Perfection.

ons; and there is nothing in the Attributes of God presupposed to being a Spirit, of which a Spirit should be an Attribute; but a Spirit is that which in our Conception doth only represent a Substance, and therefore the natural Order of this highest Expression is (as in the Original) a Spirit the God. The same is confirmed, 2 Cor. 3. 17. *ὁ δὲ κυρίως τὸ πνεῦμα ἐστίν*, *the Lord is the Spirit*; importing not only that God is a Spirit, but that he is *the Spirit*, that is, *the only Spirit*.

In this I am further confirmed, considering that all Philosophers are at a loss to give any rational Account how a Spirit moveth Matter, or how Matter acteth upon a Spirit, seeing all agree that the efficacious *Fiat* is proper to God alone; and therefore a Spirit cannot move Matter by willing it to move: So that they are forced to say, that God hath made such a Connection between certain Thoughts of Spirits, and certain Motions of Matter. Whence all that are ingenuous come also to confess, that Creatures have no Activity at all, but that God alone moves Matter, as the Spirit willeth it to be moved; and yet that Will is universally effectual; so that the Motion was never hindered but by extrinsick Force. There can nothing more evidently make God pedissequous and dependent, not only upon Angels and Men, but also upon Devils, and even in the worst of all their Actions.

But if created Spirits be but so called in resemblance to God as well as the Air, or the animal Spirits, yet cannot coexist with another Spirit or Body, then they can thrust upon Matter, or Matter upon them; and so a Spirit in the Juncture of the Nerves can act the Body, in all the ways that
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we perceive it to move, though it had no innate Inclination never to part with that Station of the Body while it could serve it, which is the only intelligible Account of the Union of the Soul and Body. So that an assistent Spirit possessing the same Place can act an intire Body, as an informing Spirit doth these who are possessed, speak and move, not only without their Will, but against their Will.

4. I consider then what a truly immaterial Spirit doth imply. And, (1) A Spirit must necessarily have Cogitation, not that it is Cogitation, which no Man can conceive without presupposing something that thinketh; but it needs not be said that a Spirit presupposeth any thing, but that it is absolute. Modern Philosophers glory much in finding a clear Distinction betwixt a Body and a Spirit; that a Spirit thinketh, and a Body is extended: and there is nothing common to these two, which indeed is very clear and not improbable. But they throw all down, by making a Spirit only a Thought: for then pure Matter may think, inasmuch as there is nothing within the whole Universe of Beings that can be supposed capable of thinking but either Spirit or Matter: not Spirit, if Spirit be but a Thought; for a Thought doth not think, therefore it would be consequent that either Matter doth think, or nothing doth; and yet the Idea of a Thought is as distinct from the Idea of Matter as can be; and so an Act shall serve for a separable Substance, and it shall be an Act without an Agent, and shall act it self.

But it is a bolder Attempt to hold God to be but a Thought, and yet it agreeth well with their

Opinion, that say, God is the Cause of himself, and by his Will preserves his Being. And one hath lately too consequently said, that God by his Will could annihilate himself, which is blasphemous enough: But I wish the Train of these Consequences would open Mens Eyes to speak more becomingly of God.

5. (2.) If a Spirit by its Essence must think, then it must necessarily be without Parts and indivisible; for if it hath Parts, the Cogitation must either be in the whole, or in more Parts, or in one Part only: If in the whole, then the Separation of any Part loseth the Cogitation, and so the Spirit is annihilated. Nor is it conceivable how a Thought can be in many Subjects; Parts are many, though they cohere in one Body; If in more Parts severally, then there are as many Spirits as Parts, in which the Cogitation is: If Cogitation be but in one, the rest were superfluous Matter.

6. (3.) A pure self-existent Spirit must be Omniscient; for there can be no imaginable Reason why it knows one thing more than another.

(4.) A self-existent thinking Spirit cannot want Capacity to determine it self, and to choose.

7. (5.) A self-existent thinking Spirit, determining it self, cannot otherwise act upon Matter, but by the Determination of the Will, and therefore it must either be able to act nothing upon Matter, or any thing, and so all extrinsick Action must cease; for a dependent Spirit must have far less Activity than a self-existent and independent Spirit. If then it must have Capacity to act, and act of it self, there can be no Reason rendred why the Action should be more of one kind than of another;

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ther ; and therefore such a Spirit must be Omnipotent : but created Spirits act nothing but by Activities freely given of God, and no further.

8. They are not excusable, though far more subtile, who apprehend a Substance without Proportion, far more pure than the purest Air, which is beyond this sensible World, so far, that it is impossible to conceive how far, and therefore is truly infinite in Extension, which they do erroneously apprehend to be a true Body or Substance ; and that it is not possible but that without this sensible World there should be a real Substance, seeing it is capable of real Attributes, because there is found all the Dimensions of a Body, when yet these also are found in a Centaur, made up of a Man and a Beast, which they acknowledg to have no true Existence, but to be impossible, and of a Shadow, which we conceive to have Dimensions, beside the Dimensions of that Body in which the dark Shadow is imagined to be subjected ; yea, it hath clear Figure like unto the Body which intercepts the Light, of which there may be true and certain Propositions ; as that the Shadow of the Head is distant from the Shadow of the Feet, and that the Shadow of the Bulk is larger than either, where there is a true Connection or Consequence, that as the one is, so is the other, true, supposed, or imagined. There is no more Reality in these imagined Spaces, or of their Dimensions, yet the Deception they are in doth more easily seduce their Thoughts to apprehend God, under the Notion of this immense Substance, which is but the Birth of the Brain.

They are more foolish and hateful that apprehend God under the determined bounded Figure of

of a Man, or of any other Creature; as there were a Sect of Men that not by Resemblance but in Reality did believe that God had a Body like to the Body of a Man, and were therefore called *Anthropomorphitæ*: They are next unto those, who though they believe not that God is corporeal, or hath a Body, yet will make bodily Figures to represent him, as the Rays of Light in a round or triangular Figure, or in such Shape of a Man as he was represented to the Apostle *John* in the Revelation: but it is clear it was not a Representation of God simply, but of the Mediator Christ, who lived then, and was dead; and his being call'd *the first and the last*, is an evident Demonstration of his Deity. But all Mens quibbling may cease when they have had so antient an Advertisement to beware to conceive or represent God under the Shape of any thing, who saith, *Take ye therefore good heed unto your selves (for ye saw no manner of Similitude on the Day that the Lord spake to you in Horeb out of the midst of the Fire) lest ye corrupt your selves, and make you a graven Image, the Similitude of any Figure.* What a pitiful Evasion is it, that a graven Image is only forbidden? when also is expressly forbidden the Similitude of any Figure; and the Reason added is general, *For ye saw no manner of Similitude.* The Fire, out of the midst of which God spake, is there expressed to be no Similitude or Figure of God, or the Sun, for which there might be the greatest Pretence; yea, it is made one of the ten Words of the Decalogue. After all this, shall we imagine that God hath changed this Precept, which was not Ceremonial, but opposite to Ceremonies? Is it not an horrid and impious Boldness to leave that Command out of the De-

Decalogue, rather than to forbear the worshipping of or by Images, as the Church of Rome does avow and practise?

I adore Thee, the only pure Spirit, that thou hast not left me to my Imagination to apprehend Thee as being any way like a Body, or Matter, by Extension or Diffusion of Substance, or being excluded where any other Substance is, or can be, whether a Body or created Spirit, it being so incident to Man that is born of a Woman to have all his first Thoughts by Imagination of Bodies and their Resemblances, except the Son of God alone; for it was the Pleasure of the Father that in him all Fulness should dwell. I lament and pity their Weakness that frame a Conception of the infinitely glorious God, as a Body, or any thing like a Body, though it were the most pure Air or Aether that Reason convinceth to be every where in this World, as the mean of Communication throughout the World, without which no Creature at distance could communicate its Thoughts or Actions to another; which scarce can the Imagination apprehend, but only the purer Reason; and which is conceived so pure, that it is invisible, impalpable, unperceivable by any Sense, in resemblance to which Men conceive Angels or their own Souls as Substances, like some part of the purest Air, that can pass without Stop through all Bodies, though of never so close Contexture; and are apt to apprehend God by the like Resemblance, because God is invisible, and can fall under no Sense, yet is far more clearly conceivable, purely by the Mind. I pray God it be not imputed to those who through Weakness have so low and unsuitable Thoughts of the ever blessed God.

MEDITATION III.

Upon the Self-Existence and Eternity of God.

BY Self-Existence I understand the Existence of a Being, which hath no Cause of the Existence thereof, and which hath its Existence in it self; for if it had an efficient Cause, it behoved to derive its Being from that Cause, as the Author thereof.

A self-existent Being can have no constituent or component Parts, whether they be essential Parts or integral Parts, or of whatsoever Composition can be supposed: for then it behoved to owe its Original to these component Parts; for such Parts, though they be not the efficient Cause of that Compound, yet they are the material, formal or essential Causes thereof.

A self-existent Being can have no final Cause, or any End ulterious to it self, but the Design thereof must necessarily be it self, as the ultimate and last End, and cannot be a Mean or Mids towards any other End; but all things designed and acted thereby must necessarily be designed for, and terminate upon it self, as the last End.

A self-existent Being hath been acknowledged by all Sects who have pretended to any Learning in the World. Those whose Minds could not be so far elevated as to apprehend a Possibility of Creation, or any thing that could be so powerful as to give Existence to a Substance which had no Existence before, and yet were not Atheists, did acknowledge

knowledg a Deity, knowing and capable to do all things possible, which did necessarily suppose a self-existent active Cause as the first Cause, and a self-existent passive or material Cause, of and upon which the first Cause made all Productions and Alterations, whether that Cause were one similar Substance, which most of them did with the greater Probability suppose to be Water or Air, or whether it were an Heterogenous Mass or Chaos, whereby the active Cause could only segregate the immutable Particles of that Chaos, and unite them in Compounds of divers Shapes, but none of them could ever distinctly propose whence Life and Perception arose; and therefore were necessitated to suppose that there had preceded eternal Trains of all Animals, and that there was no self-existent percipient Cause but these first active Causes only. Yea, all the Atheistical Philosophers who did not acknowledg a Deity, yet did acknowledg a self-existent Being both active and passive, and yet attributing no Knowledg to the active Cause, and so working without Choice by fatal Necessity; but they did acknowledg no percipient Being to be self-existent, but either by eternal Generation, or by Production from the Earth, not only Plants but Animals: These things first arising, which are less perfect, and need less Elaboration; so that Mankind was esteemed to be the last Birth of the Earth.

I rejoice that all these phantastick Suppositions are evanished, and that not only Revelation but Reason also have concurred that Creation is not only possible but true; and I do admire and resent that even some Christian Philosophers, and many of them by Profession Divines, maintain the
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impossibility of Vacuity, without any Body, or any real Extension, because such a Vacuity is inconceivable, without conceiving Longitude, Latitude and Profundity; which are the necessary intrinsic Properties of a Body, and therefore must be from Eternity. And therefore God could not annihilate the whole, or any part of Matter, leaving nothing where it was, nor could give existence to any Body, where nothing was before: And therefore the Universe must necessarily be so far extended, that there could be no further extension thereof. By these Opinions, there is supposed an eternal passive Cause from Eternity to Eternity, and there cannot be imagined an Evasion that this passive Cause must be Self-existent, or that God from Eternity did give it Existence; and yet it cannot be truly said, that he gave it Existence, if it proceeded from him by Emanation, without Choice. Nor is there any ground to suppose, that by Choice he gave it Existence from Eternity, much less that he gave it an independent Existence, that he could not annihilate it, in the whole, or any part of it.

It exceeds my Capacity to imagine how these things are consistent with the Wisdom of God, and with his relation of the World's Creation.

I have elsewhere cleared my own Judgment, that there is no Solidity in that Consequence, that Vacuity could not be imagined to be without Longitude, Latitude and Profundity; and that all the Demonstrations thereupon were as true, as upon any Body. I shall only say here, that the truth of attribution of Properties and Consequences doth not import the real existence of the Subject: For instance, tho there never had been a Triangle in the World, it ever was an unquestionable Verity,
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that every Triangle hath three Angles, for the Verity consists only in the Consequence, and is an hypothetical Verity, no ways inferring the existence of the Triangle, or any of these Angles, but only if the Subject be existent, the Attributes must likewise be existent; and therefore that in Vacuity there must be conceived Longitude, Latitude and Profundity: and all the Demonstrations founded thereupon, do only prove the truth of the Consequence and Connexion, but neither the existence of the Subject, nor of these Attributes.

The Implications of a Self-existent Being, having been thus explicated, I am fully perswaded that God, and God alone, is Self-existent, having his Existence originally in himself, and deriving the same from no efficient Cause, from no constituent or component Cause, and that he himself is his own last End, and is not a subordinate End to any other.

No Creature is capable of these Qualifications jointly; for tho a Creature may be without composition of Parts, no Creature can be without an efficient Cause, neither can any Creature have its Existence in it self, and of it self.

Nothing but God can have it Self for its last End, tho many Creatures do desire and imagine themselves to be their last End, and do obey and serve God, not for himself, as the last End of that Service, but for shunning Evil and procuring Good from him, as their last End; tho they may have that desire as a subordinate End, yet they cannot attain it if they make it their last End; and so can neither justly nor effectually design it.

Selfishness in Creatures is a capital Vice, and the original of very many Vices: for God hath printed a Principle upon every Soul, that they should not
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prefer their own Interest to the common Interest of Mankind, much less to the Honour and Pleasure of God; and therefore selfish Love in Creatures is Vicious.

Self-Love in God is suitable and congruous to his Glorious Natural Perfections: There is nothing more Excellent, nor is there any thing having any Proportion of Excellency to him.

The Scripture hath clearly exprest, *that he hath made all things for Himself, and that of him, and for him are all things.*

I do very much dislike the Opinion of these modern Philosophers, who say that God's Existence is from Himself, and his Preservation is from his own Will: which do import that he is the cause of his own Being and Preservation, and that by his own Will; for thereby he should not be without a Cause of his Existence and Preservation.

In this Meditation I have joined the Eternity of God with his Self-existence, not only as consequent from it, but rather as implied in it; for whatsoever is existent without a Cause of its Existence, must necessarily have been ever existent, and had never a beginning of Existence: it is necessarily consequent that no other thing could have Capacity to annihilate the Self-existent Being of God; and therefore his Existence must necessarily continue to Eternity.

The Notions and Subtilties of School-men, suppose and contemplate an abstract Endurance common to God and Creatures, as a real Perfection, which they derive from the continued successive Mutations, such as they perceive in Plants and Animals, which from the first appearance of their Existence, have constant Mutations, whereby they

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grow up to their Perfection gradually, and decline from it until they die: Though that every Mutation is not sensibly different from the former, yet they imagine it is really different, which yet is not always true; for there may be continuance in one Condition without Alteration, and there may be unequal Advances and Recesses, yet there are still notable Periods, as Infancy, Pupillarity, Minority, Majority, perfect Age, declining Age, and old Age; and their Imagination makes this Endurance as if it did consist of so many points of Time, as the Body consists of so many of its most minute parts or points, albeit there be not the like Reality in both.

In this way the Calculation of Time might have been by the Periods in the Lives of *Adam's* Posterity, and for the most part is so calculated in the Scripture; for thereby it is known who were prior, concomitant, and posterior of the Fathers in the Line of Scripture: And therein not only their beginning to have Children at their perfect Age, but their continuance of their begetting Sons and Daughters is express, although the continuance of their Lives be more accurately express by the Years; that is, by the Revolutions of the Sun in its proper Course. So the Scriptures express in what Years of the Life of the Fathers their Posterity were born, and in what Year after the birth of the Predecessors they died.

By the Chronology of Scripture there is a clear account from the Creation of *Adam* to *Abram*, and an exact *Ara* from the Creation of the World by the Revolutions of the Sun in the Zodiack, having no other Difficulty, but in what State the Earth was where *Adam* was created, which is far
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more probable to have been when the Fruits of the Trees were ripe, seeing God did allow *Adam* to make use of all the Fruits of Herbs and Trees, except the Forbidden Tree: So the Harvest Equinoctial is the most proper Commencement of Time.

But after the time of *Abraham* and his Sons, there was no more Lineal Deduction of the Time from Fathers to Sons; and so the exact Calculation of the number of Years from the Creation was no more certain, but the several Nations calculated the Time from some notable Occurrence, which had been most observed where they lived, and so there became many different *Ara's*, from which the Calculation of the Number of Years commeth: So the *Romans* calculated Time from the building of *Rome*, and *Christians* from the birth of *Christ*, and the *Mahometans* from the flight of *Mahomet*.

The Annual Revolution of the Sun is the most evident Succession of Motion, and therefore hath been commonly made the Standard and Rule of Successive Alterations, by which it's known when they did occur; yet some Nations did calculate by the Monthly Revolutions of the Moon, especially the *Egyptians*, who had a vast number of Years during the Reigns of their *Dynasties*, which therefore must either be fabulous, or calculated by the Revolutions of the Moon: Albeit the constant and regular successive Motion of the Sun be properly the endurance of the Time of the Sun, and so is the rule of the Time of all other regular successive Alterations; yet nothing can properly be said to have the Duration of Time but what hath these Regular Vicissitudes, such as Plants and Animals, whose successive Alterations are calculated
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by the common Motion of the Sun; yet only as by an extrinſick Denomination, by comparing theſe Viciffitudes with the Motion of the Sun: but their proper intrinſick Alteration is that whereby they have an endurance in Time, becauſe they have a Beginning, a Progreſs, and a Period of their Exiſtence.

Other Things which have not ſucceſſive regular Alterations, have not an endurance of Time, and yet the Fiction of Imagination attributes the extrinſick Denomination of the Motion of Time even to theſe; and ſo the Earth, or a Mountain created in the beginning, can only be ſaid to endure ſo many Years, becauſe they have co-exiſted with the Motion of the Sun ſo long, but have no intrinſick Time by any regular ſucceſſive Alteration of their own.

Angels and other Spirits are likewise by co-exiſtence with the motion of the Sun imagined to have an intrinſick Time of their own, though they have none, for they have no regular ſucceſſive Alterations; though they have variety of ſucceſſive Thoughts, yet there is no regular ſucceſſion of theſe Alterations.

The Schoolmen are ſo wedded to abſtract Notions, that they hold that Duration is of three kinds, Eternity, Eveternity, and Time: Eternity they attribute only to God, yet they imagine it as a Duration equivalent to the Revolutions of the Sun, as if they had ever been, and never had a Beginning: But Angels and other Spirits having a Beginning of their Exiſtence, but no Termination thereof, for diſtinction ſake they call their Endurance Eveternity.

Imagination may prompt Men to think that God, as a Preserver and Ruler of the World, hath continued so many Thousand Years; but it is too bold an Imagination to attribute any such thing to God Almighty, in whose Being there is no shadow of changing.

It is an Imagination without all reality to fancy the Eternity of God, as if it had been by infinite Revolutions of the Sun, or of the like Endurance.

It is yet a farther extension of Imagination, that all Things are eternally present with God; for then all Things must have existed e're they were created, which is an evident Inconsistency; though figuratively all Things may be said to be ever present with God, that is, that he knows all Things as clearly as if they were present and existent from Eternity.

MEDITATION IV.

Upon God's Omniscience.

THE Natural Order of the Divine Perfections leadeth me now to meditate upon his Knowledge; having in my former Meditations cleared my self, that the first Divine Attribute implied in the Deity, is to be a Spirit Self-existent, which essentially implies Knowledge: For neither the want of Extension, or the having of Penetrability, that is, a Capacity to co-exist in the same Space with another Substance, make a Spirit.

It is the common Sentiment of all considering Persons, that an Inscient or blind God, which acteth not by Knowledg and Choice, implies an Inconsistency; and therefore the making Chance or Fortune a Deity, is intirely Atheism.

The common Conception of the being a God, is a Being so perfect, that could neither be made more perfect, nor become less perfect, but is endued with all possible Perfection. The Heathens who believed many Gods that were Eternal, besides Spirits of Men, did believe them all to be as perfect as that Supposition could admit: Yet it is evident that they could neither be Omniscient, that each of them did know all the Thoughts of the rest; or Omnipotent, that they could do all that implied not Inconsistency or Imperfection; and therefore they were but Idols, and not Gods: But the Light of Nature evincing sufficiently that there can be but one God, he must necessarily be Omniscient, knowing all things that can be known. And Revelation determineth the extent of the Divine Knowledg, when the Scripture saith, *That his Understanding is Infinite*; if any thing possible, past, present, or future, were not perfectly known by God, that which he knew not, behoved to limit his Knowledg, that it could not be infinite.

Seeing God's Knowledg is Infinite, it cannot be comprehended by any Finite Capacity: *Who can search the Almighty to Perfection?* Yet it may well be apprehended, and not only believed by the Divine Testimony, but may in a great measure be known by Natural Principles, more clearly by knowing what is not consistent, than what positively is implied in it. And therefore,

1. No part of the Divine Knowledg can be temporary or successive, or have different degrees ; for thereby it could be more perfect, and yet could not be said at all times that God knew all things: And consequently God's Knowledg cannot be by Inference or Deduction, inferring an unknown thing from a known, or knowing the one more than the other ; and yet God knoweth the Implications, Causes and Consequences of all things, and what thence is deducible by Creatures. Therefore also God must know with equal Clearness and Certainty all Things past, present and to come, as well as all Things possible or impossible. Though there be a variety in the Objects, whereby God foreknew all that was to exist before any did exist, and knew that nothing did then exist ; and knew also when Things began to exist, that they did not before exist, and that many of them that did once exist, did cease, and no more exist : Yet here the Change is not in him, but in the Objects, which he did equally know in all Conditions and Circumstances.

Thence also it necessarily follows, that God's Knowledg of all Things must be eternal.

2. No part of God's Knowledg can be potential, or habitual, as the most perfect Knowledg of Creatures must be ; for they cannot possibly at once keep in their Thoughts a great Variety, much less all the Thoughts that ever they had, and least of all the Thoughts whereof they only had the Power or Habit, that they could exert them when the Objects occurred to their Thoughts : But the infinite Understanding of God doth ever actually comprehend all that is apprehensible.

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3. The Knowledge of God cannot arise from any outward Impression made upon him, because he is altogether impassible, and can admit of no alteration made in him from without ; in this his Knowledge differeth from the Knowledge of all Creatures, that their Knowledge hath its rise for the most part from the impressions of outward Objects, wherein they are passive, and feel some alteration in themselves. The most Glorious Angel cannot know the present Thoughts of others, but by some Sign making impression and alteration in him ; nor their Actings, but by such Impression : But God's Knowledge cannot be in that way.

Hence it follows that there is no more difficulty to apprehend the Fore-knowledge of God of things to come, than his Knowledge of things present ; seeing neither of them arise from impressions of the Objects.

God knows all the future Choices and Acts of the most free Creatures, where they act most indifferently, with as much Clearness and Certainty as he knoweth the Acts of Inscent Creatures, wherein they cannot alter or determin themselves, but are only altered or determined by extrinsick Force. The Scripture makes it a discriminating Test of God, the foretelling of things to come, which cannot be of things which are necessary, but of those things that are free ; and the Predictions in Scripture of the most free actings of Men many Ages before they came to pass, evidently prove his Fore-knowledge of Mens most indifferent Choices ; as *Daniel's* Prophecies of the Monarchies, the Prophecies of *Cyrus* and of *Josiah* by Name, and of their Circumstantiate Actings. What can be more Arbitrary than what Name a Father will

give his Child, which himself seldom knoweth many Days before he give it? *Cyrus's* Father was a Heathen, who neither knew nor believed this Prophecy; nor did many Kings call their Sons *Cyrus*, that they might be capable of these Predictions.

There is little Controversy concerning the extent of the Divine Knowledg, though some eminent among the *Arminians* doubted that God knew the individual Persons that would believe and be saved: And some have been so absurd, as to hold that God either could not or would not know the number of all the Individuals, or the different Accidents, but only their Kinds and common Accidents.

If Men had rested in the Universality of God's Knowledg, and had not been too inquisitive in the manner of it, tho God had shewn them that it was impossible fully to reach it, by that strong Negation implied in that Question, *Who can search the Almighty to perfection? his Wisdom is unsearchable, and his Ways past finding out*: And thereby had not raised Intricacies interfering the Divine Perfections, making less evident the Purity and Amiableness of God. It had not only been a Folly, but a Fault, to concur with the Atheist or the Ungodly in that Question; How doth God know? And is there Knowledg in the most High? But seeing so much hath been said concerning the manner of God's Foreknowledg of the Choices and Actings of free Creatures, amongst good, learned, and for the main Orthodox Divines, not only in different but in the same Communion; I thought it my Duty to improve what Capacity God had given me, with all the Reverence and Humility I could attain, to extricate my Thoughts, and to clear up the imma-
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culate Purity and infinite Loveliness of God, which might most powerfully excite me to delight in him: To which end I thought it necessary to consider the prevalent Opinions of Philosophers and Divines, concerning the manner of God's Knowledge.

That old exploded and now reviv'd Opinion of some Philosophers, is, That Second Causes had no Activity but God, at the presence of such things as were not the Causes, but the Tokens of what would follow; so that Fire did not heat or burn, or Water cool or quench, but the First Cause alone, at the presence of Fire and of Water: That there neither is nor can be any intrinsick Principle of Motion or Activity in Matter, that it cannot attempt or thrust when it doth not prevail; That Men do not move any of their Members, but only God moveth them as Man willeth, and that God makes such Thoughts in the Mind to result from such Motions of Matter, without any extrinsick Impression or Activity of the Objects: So that neither the Motions of Matter, nor the Thoughts of the Spirits, are from the Activity of Creatures, but from God alone. On this ground it is easy to infer that God must know all the Actings which seem to be from Creatures, being indeed only from himself. These grounds cannot take with any that truly acknowledge Creation; for if God could give Existence to Matter which before had none, how can it be doubted that he could give it an attempt or pressure to move such an uniform course of Motion, which it would ever follow if it were not hindered, and would always be effectual when the Impediment were removed; much more, that as he created a Spirit of nothing, he might give it its proper

proper Activities, as well as to Matter, and that upon real Impressions and Changes made in it from other Creatures. Suppose then he could do all things by himself alone, or many things by Second Causes; it cannot be doubted that it is more consonant to his Wisdom and Revelation, that he hath given such Activities. The Scripture saith, *That on the Seventh day God rested from his Labours.* Shall we then think that he acteth now in the same way that he did the first six Days? If these grounds hold, there can be no Distinction between God's Permission and his Operation, Excitation or Concurrence with the Creatures.

5. The more common Opinion, How God knows all future Actions, is, That though God hath given Activities to Creatures, and that they have a true Operation, yet they cannot exert these Activities without a distinct Excitation, and such a Concurrence of God, as every Act is as well immediately his Act as the Creature's; yea every Act must be totally his Act, and totally the Creature's: For if there be one Act of the Creator, and a several Act of the Creature, by which they concur, then that several Act of the Creature is immediately its own alone; tho God be also the cause of it, as preserving the Creature and its Activity in vigour: But certainly it is less conceiveable how one Act can be from two Actors immediately and totally, than how God can know all future Acts of free Creatures. These Men think they magnify the Power of God in this way, and therefore extend it not only to free Actions, but even to the Actions of Brutes and inanimate Creatures; that Fire cannot burn, nor any thing move without an excitation beside its natural Power given by Creation,

tion, which improperly enough they call a Pre-motion; as if Creatures were moved before they mov'd; and a Predetermination of free Creatures, as if they were determined before they were determined; which indeed might be properly said of God's Decree to determine them in Time, and of his Preparation, when he added or altered their pre-existing Powers, unless the Order of Nature or Dignity, not of Time, be understood, which is most improper.

Hence these Men do hold, That God knoweth all Things by the Inspection of his own Decree to excite and stir up his Creatures to act them; and that he can foreknow nothing that Creatures would act of themselves without such Excitation, or which they would chuse or incline to act, and that not only in Actions good and indifferent, but in those evil Acts, where the whole is evil, and no separable part could be good or indifferent.

I acknowledg that Creatures can do nothing unless God preserve them, and the Activities he has given them, by Nature or Grace, in vigour; removing by his Providence those things that would hinder them to work; and that he oft-times increaseth or diminisheth the Activities he hath given them: He made the Diurnal Motion to cease when *Joshua* prosecuted his Victory; he made it retrograde ten Degrees in the Dial of *Achaz*, which was not by hinderance of a natural Cause, which could be no other than an Angel: And there is no ground to infer, that the Angels either do move or stopt the Diurnal Motion; but as God freely gave that power of Motion in the former, he withdrew it, and in the latter he gave a power of contrary Motion, and did of new restore the Powers of both.

I do also acknowledg, That without giving a new intrinsick Power, no gracious Act can be exerted by sinful Creatures; and that God doth oft-times increase that Power constantly, or for certain Occasions; and that he can, and doth give an intrinsick Inclination for one Act only, or for the whole Acts of one kind; that he frequently brings to the remembrance of his free Creatures those Thoughts that have been in their Mind, which may induce them to Actions good or indifferent: That he can, and oft-times hath made the same Impressions upon the Minds or Imaginations of free Creatures that outward Objects could have done, whereby at first view they conceive these outward Objects present: That he can and frequently doth hinder the recurring to the memory of these Objects or Thoughts that were in their Mind or Imagination before, and would have recurred if they had not been hindered. All these things are intelligible, consistent and consonant to Scripture, Reason and Experience.

But as to that general Excitation or Premotion, none of these Men did ever distinctly explain wherein it doth consist, and so they do nothing to clear themselves, or others, of the way of God's working upon and with his Creatures; nor can it give them any distinct knowledg, how in that way God can foreknow all things: So that they can only say that God doth foreknow all the actings of his Creatures, but they do not distinctly know how; unless in every Act he and his Creatures must immediately and totally act, which not only clears not, but choaks Humane Reason.

I do also acknowledg that God knows all things, by reflecting upon himself; he knows what is possible,

sible, though without all Existence and Reality, by the knowledg of his own Infinite Power, which could give Existence to all imaginable things, but gives no Reality to the conceived or imagined Object, but only an extrinsick Denomination from the Power of God.

It is amongst the Fancies of most Philosophers, that the Essences of Things are Eternal, and that all we now see to be common to every kind, is either implied in their Essence, or inseparably connected with it, or consequent from it; that even the Divine Power cannot change it but by annihilation of the whole: And that thence there are infinite numbers of Eternal Verities, all which are no more but *entia rationis*, Births of the Brain without any reality in the Object.

It is true there are Eternal Verities, not only of God, but Hypothetick Eternal Verities of Creatures, which cannot possibly be false; as that nothing can exist and not exist at once; or that a Triangle must have three Angles, and that none of the three Sides can be so long as the other two, that the longest streight Side must have the widest Angle; which imports no reality of the Subject or the Attributes, but imports only that a Triangle cannot be but must imply these things.

The Schoolmen also make a great Business of the Transition of Things, from the state of Possibility to the state of Futurition; as if Futurition at least gave some reality to the thing future before it existed, whereas it is only an extrinsick Denomination, not only from the Power but from the Purpose of God.

The Decrees of God are not only his Determination of what is Just, but his Determination of his

his Freedom in what he intends to come to pass; and so are his Purposes or Intentions to act, or to enable his Creatures to act, where their natural Capacities, or their acquired or infused Capacities are not sufficient: For what he intends without addition of a farther Capacity, or where he intends to admit and allow Creatures Actings by their Capacities, or to permit them to act, where he does not allow their Actings, but designs to bring good out of their Aberration, or whereby he hinders the Activities of his Creatures, by withdrawing or abating them, or provides the hindrance of other Creatures to oppose them, or encreaseth the Activities of those he allows and admits to act by their own preserved Strength.

By these means only God can bring all things to pass which he purposeth; therefore it were in vain to suppose any further, especially that which would not well quadrate with his Word, and with his immaculate Purity and Holiness, nor with the Freedom of his Creatures, or with his Justice in rewarding and punishing them. If God's Decrees were all operative, he behoved to act in the worst as much as in the best Actions of his Creatures; and that distinction of his operative and permissive Decrees, (which hath been generally received by all Protestants) should be utterly laid aside; and God behoved to be the immediate and total actor of the Hatred of himself, as well as of the Love of himself.

Nothing can come to pass but that wherein the last requisite is a Divine Decree for acting it, promoting it, permitting it, or hindering it: If I could foreknow what Creatures of themselves would do or incline to, I could not thence conclude the

the Event, unless I also knew whether God would hinder or further their Capacities and Inclinations, or the counter-acting of others ; and therefore every thing that comes to pass is attributed to God, in respect of his Decrees, one of these ways : So he is said to harden *Pharaoh's* Heart, because he suffered *Pharaoh* (against all his Persuasions, Expostulations and Miracles) to harden his own Heart against God's Command ; yet it is also said that *Pharaoh* hardened his own Heart : And God is said to blind the Eyes of the Wicked, that they should not see no otherwise but by Permission. I do not like of that Position, that God is active in causing Sin, as the punishment of Sin ; but the Scripture expresseth it well, that he gives the Wicked (after means of reclaiming them rejected) up to their own ways. By Permission is not only understood the not hindering, but the admitting Creatures to work, by the Faculties of Nature and Grace given them, by the Preservation thereof without farther help, whether it be in things indifferent or morally good.

There is a great difference between evil Acts, which have several separable parts, whereof the one might be good or indifferent, if it were not contaminated by the other, as commonly it is in the doing of an Act, and the directing of it to an End ; the Act may be good, directed to another End : As the giving of Alms to be seen of Men ; the doing of Justice to shun Importunity. The End also may be good, but the Act is bad directing to that End ; as those who killed the Apostles designed thereby to do God good Service. But there are other evil Acts which have no separable parts, as the hatred of God ; for that singular Act is inseparable

separable from the Object. Hatred in general is but an abstract Notion, but the singular Act is the Hatred of God, where there is no separable individual parts ; as in the giving of Alms to be seen of Men : These Acts therefore are called intrinsically evil. God may excite these Acts where the Intention or Direction only is evil, God's Intention being quite different ; so he may excite the giving of Alms, intending thereby the relief of the Poor, but the directing of the Alms to be seen of Men, is a distinct separate Act. There is no ground inferring that God excites to that end, much less that he excites to Acts intrinsically evil, which no Intention can make good, and where there are not different Parts, or different Acts : Therefore God doth not foreknow Acts intrinsically evil, or the evil Intention of Acts that otherwise might be good or indifferent in his Decree to excite them, but only in his permissive Decree, not to hinder the free Creatures in acting them, wherein I am convinced by many pregnant Reasons.

First, God's foreseeing such Acts in his purpose to excite the Creature to them, and his being an immediate and total Actor of them, appears to me inconsistent with his immaculate Purity, but thereby he behaved to be the Author of Sin. I know many good Men perceive not this Consequence, and are far from acknowledging it, and are forced to harsh Concessions to shun it ; as that God is the immediate Cause of the Act, but not of the Vitiolity of the Act, which is only Privative, and requires no Cause nor any Efficiency, but Deficiency, which importeth nothing as to evil Intention, or Acts intrinsically Evil, but only as to Acts that would be Good, if right directed ; and is well illustrated
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by riding of a *Lame Horse*, where the *Rider* is the cause of the *Riding*, but the *Lameness* of the *Horse* is the cause of the *Halting*; but this cannot be applicable to an indivisible *Act*, whence *Sin* necessarily results, and so the whole *Act* or the *Act* of *Intention* is totally *Evil*: And thereby there cannot be one part attributed to *God* and another to the *Creature*, if *God* be not the immediate and total *Actor*, but that the *Creature* hath a different *Act*; the foresight of that *Act* could not be by the *Decree* of *God* to act it, and so all free *Acts* could not be foreseen that way. The more *Ingenuous* are forced to recur to this *Evasion*, that *God* is under no *Law*, and so the same *Act* may be *Sin* in the *Creature* and no *Sin* in *God*; but this overturns the *Being* of *Acts* morally *Good* or *Evil*, in congruity to the *Nature* of *God*, which are not so, because *God* willeth them to be or not to be, but he so willeth them, because they are absolutely and immutably *Good*, and not alone by the *Will* or *Decree* of *God*: *God* is above his positive *Law*, but he is neither above nor under his moral *Law*, but is a *Law* to himself, else *God* could make *Vertue* *Vice*, and *Vice* *Vertue*; for whatever depends upon *Acts* of the *Will*, can be altered by another *Act* of the same *Will*: So *God* hath altered many of his positive *Laws* and *Precepts*, because they are only *Good* in that they are willed and commanded.

Secondly, *God* hath expressly declared that he hath hindered many *Acts* of his *Creatures*, which must necessarily import that they would have been acted, if they had not been hindered; for it is inconsistent to say that *God* decreed to be an *Actor* with the *Creature*, and yet decreed to hinder that same *Act*: Thus *God* declareth that he had hin-

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dered *Abimelech* to touch *Sarah*, whom he had taken on design to make her his Concubine, but God disabled him that he could neither meddle with her nor any other.

Thirdly, There are many Sins of Omission, where in the Sinner doth not resolve to omit, but by Carelessness and Inconsideration omits; here there is no Act of the Creature: And if God hinder the Creature to consider, he must be sole Actor in these Sins; and if not, there is no positive Act or Excitation in them, and so no Decree for such Acts; and therefore they cannot be foreseen in that Decree, and yet they are certainly foreseen.

Fourthly, If it were sufficient to clear the Divine Purity, that Sin is only a Privation, requiring no Efficiency but Deficiency, that could not but also vindicate the Creature, albeit a total Actor of the same Act.

Fifthly, If God decree, without foresight of what the Creature, using its proper Power, would act, then he behoved to decree the torment of his Creatures, without consideration of their future Sins, voluntarily to be acted by them; which is very inconsistent with his Justice, and forces the Authors of this Opinion to acknowledg, That God might eternally torment his innocent Creatures, and that it is greater Goodness to give them a miserable Being, than no Being at all; which is neither consistent with his Justice nor his Goodness, and gives a most unlovely Representation of him.

Sixthly, There is nothing more inculcated in Scripture than the Efficacy of Prayer, for it is said, *That the fervent Prayer of the Righteous availeth much.* But if God did determine all future things without Foresight and Consideration of the Prayers of his

People, Prayer were of no value. but a meer Formality without any Efficacy : For to what purpose should any pray to an unchangeable God, who had already determined all things without consideration of Prayer? I know no Evasion can be made, but that God hath determined not only the Matter but the Manner of what was to come to pass, and so determined many things to be after antecedent Prayer ; but then Prayer were a meer antecedent Formality, and no efficacious Mean, availing much. But if God did determine many things upon the foresight and consideration of the earnest Prayer of his People, they might with as much Confidence pray as if he were undetermined when they prayed.

I know there are many specious Reasons accustomed to be brought for God's being the immediate total Actor, in all the Acts of his Creatures ; which I consider as Objections.

1st. It is objected, If God decreed any thing upon Foresight, and Consideration of any thing in his Creatures, he were not altogether independent, but behoved to depend upon such Considerations, and be pedissequous to his Creatures : This Reason can conclude nothing against God's Foresight and Consideration of what he foresaw in the Creature, as given by himself, above their natural Strength ; for thereby he depended on nothing but on his own Supernatural Grace. It is true, that if God's Election were upon the foresight of the Creatures Faith, or good Works, by that common Power all Men had by their Birth, they might glory in themselves, and the Election could not be said to be of Free Grace, and God might be thought pedissequous to the Creatures ; and therefore that Opinion of Papists and *Arminians* is justly

rejected. But God cannot be said to be pedissequous to the Creatures he foresees would maliciously or obstinately and finally reject the offer of Grace, because he decrees to let them follow their own Ways, and in Justice to punish them whom he doth not follow but crosseth: And though God doth not decree to damn the Reprobate, without a meritorious Cause deserving Damnation; it doth no way follow that he doth save and glorify the Elect upon foresight of a meritorious Cause in them. God's Independance cannot exclude the consideration of the Object of his Decree, as it must be considered in his Decree: He cannot decree to give Mercy, but to a Creature that is in some measure miserable; He cannot decree to relieve a Creature, unless he consider it as distress'd. He hath clearly declared, and consequently decreed, that he would never pardon the Sin against the Holy Ghost: Therefore he behoved to foresee who would commit that Sin, for he doth nothing in vain, and would never decree any thing relating to a Case that were never to exist; he could not decree to elect any Creature, but upon Foresight and Consideration that he was to create that Creature, and that he was never to suffer it to have Hatred and Despight against him. In that Golden Chain, *Whom he did foreknow, them he did predestinate to be conform to the Image of his Son; and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified:* The first Link is Foreknowledg of the Object to be predestinated, which with congruity to the Divine Natural Perfections were predestinable, prior in order of Nature to Predestination: Yet in none of these is

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the Independance of God inroached on. Could a miserable or distressed Creature, be so impudent as to pretend that its Misery or Distress were the cause of God's Mercy or Relief, but only the Object or Occasion thereof, the true Cause being God's Mercy and Goodness; and so God's Decree to inflict eternal Punishment upon his rational Creature, that he foresaw would hate him or be obstinate in Sin, is his own Justice and Purity.

2dly. It is said, *In God we live, we move, and have our being.* And therefore all the Motions of our Minds and Bodies, must be his Motions, acted by him; which Inference is no better than this, in him we have our Being, therefore our Being is his Being: but the true meaning is cleared by those Things which are frequently said of Christ, That they are in him, and yet are the Creatures, importing no more but that they are by Virtue and Power derived from Christ; and so we move in God, that is, by Virtue and Power derived from him.

3dly. It is objected, That if in the worst of Actions God were not Actor, he could not be the first and universal Cause; but thence it will not follow, that the first and universal Cause must still be the immediate and total Cause, which is necessary to an universal Predetermination.

4thly. The main Reason against universal Predetermination, is to vindicate the Purity of God, which it doth not; for whosoever permitteth Evil that he could hinder, is necessary thereto, and guilty thereof: And so God judgeth his Creatures, which will not conclude against God, because Creatures are not only subject to the moral and unchangeable Laws of God, but to his positive Laws;

neither are Creatures universally obliged to hinder all evil Acts that they were able to hinder: For God having set up Civil Authority, thereby obligeth Subjects to suffer the Legal Executions thereof, though unjust, albeit they have sufficient Strength to hinder the same. This Reason hath been the chief Inducement of the Error of those, who, to maintain the Purity of God, incroach upon his Power and Wisdom, holding that the Will of a free Creature is essentially undeterminable by any other than by it self; and therefore God can do no more but perswade and bring Motives into the Mind, and so is blameless, having done all he could do to hinder Sin. For certainly God could have been so powerful a Perswader, as to make Prophets and Preachers go to all Nations, which he hath not done; and this Ground encroacheth on God's Omnipotence, that he cannot effectually over-rule his Free Creatures, and encroacheth on his Wisdom, who having no need of any Creature, created such which he could not govern, but behoved only to supplicate and perswade.

The 5th Reason assign'd for universal Predetermination, is brought from the accurate arguing of that Case, by the Apostle Paul, in the 9th of the Romans, where it is said of Esau and Jacob, *That the Children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the Purpose (or Decree) of God according to Election might stand, not of Works, but of him that calleth: Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated.* Against which he brings this Objection, *Is there Unrighteousness with God?* To which he answers with a strong Denial, *God forbid.* For he saith to Moses, *I will have Mercy on whom I will have*

have Mercy: And thence concludeth, *That it is not of him that runneth, or of him that willett, but of God that sheweth Mercy.* Whence he doth conclude, *Therefore hath he Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth.* Against which Conclusion he brings a new Objection thus, *Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his Will?* To which he answereth thus, *Nay, but, O Man, Who art thou that replies against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the Potter Power over the Clay, of the same Lump, to make one Vessel unto Honour, and another unto Dishonour?* Thence the Authors of universal Predestination, or Excitation of God to the worst Acts, think they have unanswerable Grounds to infer, That God is not only the Permitter, but the Actor of Hardening, as well as of Mercy: Yea, that he hath no more Consideration of what the Creatures were to act in Reprobation and Damnation, than in Election and Glorification; but that of the same Lump or Mass of Mankind, he doth as indifferently make the Vessels of Dishonour, that is, the Reprobate, as the Vessels of Honour, that is, the Elect. But the Context sufficiently cleareth the Mistakes of these Inferences; for it inferreth nothing as to Reprobation, that the Children being not yet born, had done nothing of Good or Evil; the Inference is only that Election might not be of foreseen Works. But where it is said, that God loved *Jacob*, and hated *Esau*, tho they had yet done nothing, it doth not infer, That as there is no foreseen Merit, or cause of Love of the Elect, so that God hates the Damned without a meritorious Cause deserving his Hatred;

there is no Consequence from the Freedom of God's Election and Love, which are Acts of Bounty; to infer the Freedom of his Hatred and Reprobation, which are Acts of Justice; for Bounty and Mercy are absolutely free, but so is not Justice. But the main Mistake is, that the Vessels of Dishonour are supposed to be the Reprobate, and the Vessels of Honour the Elect: As if God as indifferently reprobates and elects, as the Potter doth of the same Lump, make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour: Whereas it is demonstrably clear by the Context, that by the Vessels of Dishonour are meant the hardened obstinate Sinners, and by the Vessels of Honour the Elect, whose Heart God softneth, which appeareth clearly: First, From the words preceding, *Why doth he yet find fault? For who hath resisted his Will?* that is, no Man can resist his Will if he please to soften him: And therefore why doth God complain that so many are hardened? The meaning cannot be, Why doth God find fault that so many are reprobated? For God cannot complain of his own Act of Reprobation, which is an Act of his Justice: Yea, tho it were an Act of his Sovereignty only, it is still his own Act; but he complaineth of their hardening, and therefore it cannot be by his Act, but by his Permission; which is yet more clear by the words following, *God willing to shew his Wrath, and to make his Power known, endured with much Long-suffering the Vessels of Wrath fitted to Destruction, and that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the Vessels of Mercy, which he had before prepared unto Glory.* Where I do remark, That God ascribeth unto himself the preparing the Vessels of Mercy unto Glory, but that he did not
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prepare the Vessels of Wrath for Destruction, but with much long-suffering Patience endured them; which is a clear Evidence, that he did only permit them to harden their Hearts, and was no way active in it: So then the Vessels of Honour are far better said to be the regenerate and softned, and the Vessels of Dishonour to be those who have hardened their own Hearts. So it is as free for God to have Mercy and soften whom he will, and to endure and permit others to harden themselves, as it is to the Potter, of one Lump to make one Vessel to Honour, and another to Dishonour.

The 6th Reason brought for universal Predestination is, That seeing Freedom is by both Parties acknowledged to be a Power to do, or not to do all things requisite for doing, being in readiness; therefore if God did not determine that Freedom in all Cases, it were impossible for him to know how the Creature would determine it self.

All the Strength of this Reason is, That we must deny God's universal Knowledge, unless we can show how he knoweth, wherein there is no shadow of Consequence; for many things certainly we know that they are, and yet it is as certain, that we know not how they are. Shall we therefore, because God hath said, *Who can search the Almighty to Perfection?* (that is, none can so search him) conclude that he cannot so search himself?

Yet tho I be far from the Presumption to give a full account, how God doth foreknow the Actings of all his Creatures, I shall endeavour to clear my self therein, so far as my Reach goeth, by applying what general Thoughts I have formerly shown, more particularly.

First

First then; I do perceive that of the Actings of Creatures, some only may be, others must be, and a third sort shall be, which is more than may be, and less than must be. These three kinds are evidently distinct and different; and seeing God is Omniscient, he must not only know what may be, and what must be, but what shall be, tho not necessarily, and all the three with equal Clearness and Certainty: For there is a great difference between Necessity and Certainty; it is true, wherever there is Certainty, there is a necessity of Consequence, that is, that that Knowledg is infallible, but not a necessity of Causality; that the Cause of that thing certainly known, must act necessarily, and not freely. God knows all his own future free Acts certainly, and yet he knows many of them to be by the Freedom of Indifference, and not to flow from Necessity, that he must have so acted.

The Acts of Creatures that only may be, are known to God by the Faculties and Capacities he hath given to his several Creatures; many Acts whereof might be, and yet never come to exist. As to this Point of God's Knowledg there can be no doubt.

Secondly; The Acts of Creatures which must be, are, first, the Acts of inscient Matter, which cannot alter its own Actings, because it cannot perceive, or know, when and where to alter; and therefore all these Alterations are from extrinick Force, either from other inscient Matter, or from the Force of free Actors. So all the Actings and Alterations of inanimate Bodies in the Universe, tho they seem to us contingent and accidental, yet are all necessary, and so may be known

known by God, not only as certain, but as necessary, except in so far as they are altered by free Actors, which come to be considered among free Acts.

Thirdly; The Acts of Brutes, tho they determine themselves by the Perception of Objects, yet they do it not freely, nor can they act variously, all the Circumstances being the same; and therefore their Acts are also necessary, supposing the Objects which they perceive: So that seeing God knows the Objects perceived, he must know what Acts will thereupon follow.

Fourthly; There are Acts of free Creatures, which are not free, but do proceed as the Instincts of Brutes, that upon Perception of their proper Objects, they will certainly follow: Such is the Desire of Well-being or Happiness, which Rational Creatures thinking upon it, can neither counteract, nor suspend. These may be known in their Causes no less than the Actings of Brutes; and as God hath freely given these useful Propensions, he can give the like, either as to a singular Act, or as to a whole kind of Acts.

Fifthly; The only Difficulty remains as to God's Knowledg, or Fore-knowledg of the free Acts of the free Creatures. As to which I perceive, that I (and it's like many others) have been much mistaken in apprehending the way of the acting of free Creatures, supposing that their Appetites and Aversions were altogether free as to most Objects, and were directly in their own Power; and that Pleasure was a kind of Appetite, and Grief, of Aversion, which were in our Power as other Appetites: But upon more accurate Consideration, I find that Pleasure and Pain, or Grief,
are

are neither Acts of our Understanding, nor of our Will, or Appetite, but of a different Faculty given us by God, not by necessary Connection with, or Consequence from Human Nature, but freely at his Option. There may be a general Pain or Grief from the tearing of the tender Parts of the Organs of Sense, and a common Pleasure from the easy Access of Objects to these Senses. But tho all Animals have five Senses, these could not make the Diversity of the Pleasures and Pains they find, arising from the Perception of Objects: One kind of Animals have Pleasure from the Perception of one Object, and another kind of Animals have Grief from the Perception of the same, tho both have the same Senses, and Complexion; that such Objects give such variety of Tastes and Smells to the same Senses of different Animals; that Men have so great Pleasure of the Proportion of Shapes and Colours in Beauty, and yet Brutes of the perfectest Sense have not the same; that the Touch of such Objects to such Organs excites so excessive Pleasure, or so much Grief; that the Concourse of such Sounds in Harmony should give so great Pleasure, and others in Discord so much Displeasure; whereof most Brutes, which have more perceiving Ears, are uncapable; bring me to conclude, That Pleasure and Pain in most things are by particular Faculties freely given of God, that thereby he may rule his Creatures.

I perceive also, that Pleasure and Pain can be no Acts of Understanding; and tho the Understanding hath reflexive Acts upon it self, or its own Acts, yet it never reflects upon Pleasure as its own Act, but as the Act of that Object that excites it; and upon Grief, as the Act of the Object

Object that grieves, it does not think that it grieves it self.

Pleasure and Grief are not Acts of the Will or Appetite, but are the Objects and Motives thereof; and therefore Joy and Grief are not directly in our Power, that we can have them by willing them: Accurate Advertence will show, that e're we can excite them, we must bring into thought their proper Objects most powerfully by Application to our Senses, and more faintly, by bringing them into our Imagination or Memory; and no further than these Objects are proper to raise Joy or Grief. If we could take Pleasure by willing or desiring it, it were as easy to will the greatest as the least Pleasure, and none but Fools would ever want it; but we can as easily make Light in the Darkness by willing it, as we can take Pleasure by willing it; the Will hath no reflexive Acts, and therefore the Object of the Will cannot be the Act of it.

Our Freedom by which we differ from Beasts, consists mainly in that we can divert our Thoughts from thinking upon the Objects of Grief, or Pleasure, by applying them to other Objects exciting the contrary, which may either abate or extinguish the former: if we cannot remove the Objects of sensible Grief or Pain, yet by thinking upon other pleasing Objects, we may be insensible of the Pain, yea have Joy in it; as in an extatick Pleasure of the Mind, the greatest Pain of the Sense is not felt. A Woman in Child-birth hath Pleasure in the Continuance of her Pain, and Grief in the ceasing of it. The Pain of cutting off a Member, is overcome by the Pleasure of preserving Life. The Pleasure of obeying God may
abate

abate or overcome the greatest Pain sustained for him, which hath made Martyrs sing in the midst of the Flames which were consuming their Bodies: Yea, of the far greater Sufferings of Christ it is said, that for the Joy set before him, he suffered the Cross, despising the Shame.

I do also perceive that the greatest Extent of my Freedom is, That I can do what I please, and that I can choose or will nothing but that wherein I find some Pleasure: and therefore in Cases of Deliberation, where I can find no Pleasure on the one part more than on the other, I do suspend my Choice, and oft-times I can make no Choice, but the Deliberation ceaseth without any positive suspending Act of the Will. I find Grief in dubious Cases, that I cannot perceive a preferable Pleasure, and would be glad that the Opinion of any would cast the Ballance of Indifferency, and do oft cast it my self upon very inconsiderable, or fancied Preference. All which evidences, that I am not so much Master of my Actions as I imagined.

Seeing then God knoweth certainly, what is pleasant or displeasing to every free Creature, and where the Prevalence is, and knoweth all the Objects that make Impressions, and especially knoweth his own Purpose to give occasional Inclinations, and to bring former Objects to Remembrance, and others into the Mind; and that he can and doth make Impressions without Objects, the same which could be by them; there ariseth to me a great Light, how he knoweth the free Actings of his Rational Creatures, and how he moves them, and rules them, without Violation of the Faculties he gave them: And I see no necessity that he should give an Excitation to all the Acts of his Creatures,
much

much less, that he should excite them to the worst Acts, or be immediate total Actor therein, to the effect that he may certainly know them; yet hath he still a Decree about all that shall come to pass, either operative or permissive: So it is said, That by the determinate Counsel of God Christ suffered by wicked Hands.

There is far less Difficulty about God's Knowledge, or Fore-sight of the contemplative Thoughts of Creatures, which have always a Connection by which they can trace them back, unless a new extrinick Impression occur, the Thoughts thence arising having the like Dependence.

Some learned Men, to extricate the Difficulties of this matter, endeavour to cut the Knot they cannot loose, by saying, all things were eternally present to God: which can neither be true, that things future were present, whereby they behoved at once to be existent, and not existent; nor tho it were true, doth it ease the Difficulty, for God knoweth not things by their Impressions, as Creatures do; and therefore it is as difficult to know how he knoweth the present as the future Acts of Creatures. Others deny a Predetermination, or Premotion in evil Acts, but acknowledg a simultaneous or consequent Concourse therein, whereby God is the immediate and total Actor, as well as the Creature, which doth no whit more vindicate the Purity of God than the Opinion of the Predeterminants, but supposeth and acknowledgeth God's Fore-knowledg of the Inclination and Choice of the Creature, and therefore doth concur therewith; nor can it vindicate his Purity, as if he who knows the wicked Resolution of any Creature, should think he could warrantably concur and promote it, My

My Omniscient God ! I adore thy immaculate Purity and infinite Wisdom, whereby thou hast so ordered thy Dispensations, and the Actings of thy Creatures, that their Liberty is preserved, tho thou certainly knowest what freely they will do, without exciting them to that which is morally evil ; whereby thou art free of all Accession to their Sin, and hast bounded their Appetites, that they can will nothing but under the apprehension of some Good wherein they have Pleasure ; and that thou hast freely given special Pleasures and Grievances arising from the Perception of several Objects, whereby as from Eternity, thou didst clearly foreknow all the Circumstances they were to be in : So what Pleasure or Grief would thence arise, or be prevalent, and what Appetite or Aversion would thence, and from thy own special Influence follow ; and that thou hast given to thy Creatures not only Propensions working necessarily, and Powers sufficient to work that which they do not, but also Inclinations efficacious, which shall ever work what thou hast purposed ; yet not of necessity, but freely, and thereby be capable of Praise and Reward. And I bless thee, that thou hast helped me to see the Consistency and Congruity of the Freedom of Creatures with thy Prescience, and Providence ruling all their Inclinations and Actions.

To conclude this intricate but important Controversy, Whether God knows all things in his Decree, to excite his Creatures in all their Actions, good, bad and indifferent : Or, that he foreseeth in his Decrees partly operative, partly permissive, foreseeing what Creatures would do of their proper Inclinations, and allowing them so to do, where

where their acting would be congruous to his total Decrees, and exhorting or dissuading them from ill or incongruous Acts, by bringing into their Minds effectual Motives, or diverting their Minds, by turning their Thoughts to other Objects, or enduing them with supernatural Inclinations for one or more Acts, and increasing the same to be effectual; by which all Acts, morally good or indifferent, might be brought to pass, and where he decreed to permit Acts morally evil, neither to exhort, incite, or bring Thoughts into Mind conducing thereto, but leaving Creatures to their own Capacities and Inclinations therein, as he knoweth Pleasure or Aversion would prevail. I shall pursue my Thoughts no further thereon at this time; but thus far, that to me it appears evident, that tho Difficulties might occur on both sides that human Frailty could not fully extricate, it is more safe to stand on that side where the Purity, Justice and Loveliness of God is most refulgent, than where any of his natural Perfections is less evident; for we are much more obliged to know his moral, than his natural Perfections.

Having solved the Difficulty appearing to arise from the 9th of the *Romans*, I found no necessity to enlarge upon other places of Scripture, which seem to import God's operative Influence in very wicked Actions, and his Decree or Intention to effect the same; such as his Commission to *Isaiah* to exhort the People of *Israel* to Repentance and Obedience, and yet showing him that they would not obey, and ordering him to make their Ears dull that they might not hear, and their Hearts hard that they might not understand, and be saved, which doth not infer God's Co-operation in

Sin, as a Punishment of preceding Sin ; as if God had been active in hardening their Hearts, because they refused to hearken to the Prophet's former Exhortations, which could neither consist with the Purity or Prudence of God. His Purity did not admit such Co-operation, nor could his Prudence allow the same ; seeing their rejecting his Offers and Exhortations, was matter enough for his Justice ; so that it was in vain to add farther Fuel to that Fire : But the true meaning of the Place is, that here, as in many other places, God speaks not of the desired End of his Divine Dispensations, but of the Event or Issue thereof, which he did fore-see, and decreed to permit, but did neither desire nor approve that Event. So Christ saith, that he came not into the World to bring Peace, but a Sword, and to raise Hatred amongst the nearest Relations, as being the fore-^{seen} Event, but not the desired or approved End of his Coming, which is clear from the Annunciation of his Birth by the Angels, *Glory to God in the highest, Peace on Earth, and good Will towards Men*, which was the proper and designed End of his Coming ; and therefore his bringing a Sword and Hatred, could only be the Issue or eventual End of his Coming.

MEDI-

MEDITATION V.

Upon the Will and Pleasure of God.

THE next Divine Perfection to the Understanding and Knowledge of God, is His Will: Concerning which, I perceive, that there are no less Mistakes than concerning his Knowledge; some making no difference between God's Power and his Will; as if there were nothing possible to exist which he doth not will to exist, which *in sensu composito* is true; that is, it is impossible any thing could exist, unless God willed it to exist, which would serve only to amuse and amaze ordinary Capacities; as if God's Power were exhausted and terminate, so that he could do no more than what he did decree to come to pass, tho he would: but certainly, tho it be impossible that any thing should come to pass but according to the Will of God effecting or permitting; yet it is not impossible that God could have willed otherwise than he hath willed, else he were in nothing free by the Freedom of Indifferency; so that he could not have made the World sooner or later than he hath done, neither more nor fewer Kinds, nor Individuals of the Creatures; which falls in with that old abominable Opinion, That the World was brought forth by Emanation from God, and so was eternal. Of which Opinion they come little short, who hold, that it is impossible to annihilate any part of Matter, for there would still remain

the Dimensions of a Body, which are inseparable from a Body; and therefore Matter must be infinite in Extension, and must either be self-existent and uncreated, or must proceed from God, not freely, but by necessary Emanation, as Light is supposed to do from the Sun: So that God hath done, or can do nothing concerning Matter, but to set Parts of it in Motion, whereby they must have different Figures, all which I do abhor.

It is beyond doubt, That God's Will to have a present Effect, cannot possibly want that Effect, as saith *Isaiah*; *The Lord of Hosts hath purposed, and who shall disannul it? and his Hand is stretched out, and who shall turn it back?* Where God's Purpose is distinguished from the stretching out of his Hand or Power, that is, his Intention of a thing to come is distinct from acting at the time of its Existence, as is clear by the Apostle *Paul*, affirming, *That he works all Things after the Counsel of his own Will.*

It is also certain, That it is an incommunicable Perfection of God, that his Will is ever effectual. No Creature can produce any Effect by willing it to be, but there must be an Executive Power distinct from the Will; as if a Creature will forbear to think upon any particular Object, the Execution is by the Understanding's possessing it self with another Object, hindering the Thoughts of the former. If a Creature resolve to move, it cannot thereby move unless it have a distinct Locomotive Power: For God will not give that his Glory to another, that his Will cannot possibly be ineffectual as it is willed.

Schoolmen, to extricate the Difficulties concerning God's Will, have made several Distinctions of it, in a decreeing Will, a promising Will,

a permissive Will, a commanding or prohibiting Will, an approving and accepting Will, and that which is called *voluntas signi* & *voluntas beneplaciti*: This last hath been, and is very apt to be much abused; as if God by Signs did express a Will which he did not please should take Effect, which is inconsistent with his Veracity and Sincerity; and tho it may receive a safe Interpretation, by straining the words, it ought not to be used. The safe meaning can only be, that that which may innocently be presumed to be the Will of God, is not always truly his Will: As when God commanded *Abraham* to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*, *Abraham* did sincerely intend to do it, as innocently conceiving it to be the Will of God, consistent with his Promise, That in *Isaac* should all Nations be blessed, knowing that God could, and believing that he would restore sacrificed *Isaac* to Life again; in which Belief he did not sin, tho he erred by an innocent Mistake, supposing that to be sure which was not: for when he lifted up his Hand with the Knife to give the deadly Blow, he had little ground to doubt of the Effect, and consequently of the Will of God; yet by God's stopping him even in that Posture, he knew he was mistaken of the Will of God. But from such rare Cases it is not safe to conclude upon the Will of God, as did *Jonah* upon the Command given him to preach to *Nineveh*, that within forty days it would be destroyed; which being a Threatning designed for Repentance, and not for a meer Prediction, had both by Reason and Revelation implied the Mercy of God upon Repentance, though it was not Repentance unto Life, nor universal; and which if it had been expressed, *Jonah* would have had no pretence for his

Anger, that the repenting *Ninevites* were not destroyed.

This Distinction of the Will of God is also extended by some to his commanding or forbidding Will, because his Will is not always that that which he commands should take effect, which is more incongruous to the Sincerity of God than the former; as if it were not always pleasing and acceptable unto God that his Will should be obeyed, even then when he permitteth it to be disobeyed, because by his Wisdom he saw it congruous to his own Nature, and for his Glory, to create his Rational Creatures with Reason and free Choice, that they should not act by meer Instinct as Brutes, but be governed by Rewards and Punishments; which necessarily importeth that sometimes they should be permitted to make wrong use of that Freedom, being always over-ruled for his Glory: Yet without doubt, that in which they miscarry is unacceptable to God, and justly punishable by him; and so he cannot exert an Act of his Will to effect what he abhorreth and punisheth; but he exerteth only a permissive Act, which terminates in himself, and hath no outward Operation, but is immanent, and not transient; by which he willeth to forbear the exerting of his Will to hinder these Acts, in so far as Evil doth necessarily thence result, whether it be in the Essence of the Act, or in the evil Intention of that which otherwise might be good; so that his Command doth not import his Will to operate or effect these things presently, or his Intention so to do for the future, but his Pleasure in what he commands, which is evident by what *Paul* saith. *For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all Men to be*

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Upon the Will and Pleasure of God. 71

be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth: where his Will is exprest to be his Acceptance and his Pleasure; but Pleasure is not properly an Act of the Will.

That Pleasure is no Act of the Will (albeit it be very little adverted, but on the contrary, Pleasure is reckoned among the Appetites or Affections.) Upon accurate Consideration it will easily appear, that Pleasure is neither an Act of the Understanding nor of the Will, but of a Power distinct from both; for it is a chief Object both of the Understanding and of the Will. I do by my Understanding perceive Pleasure when I have it, and I know when I have it not, albeit I have no Grief or Pain for want of it, but am in a middle indifferent State, without either Pleasure, Pain or Grief. And tho this Act of the Understanding may in some sense be said to be a reflexive Act, as when I advert, and think that I have a Faculty of Understanding, or an Act of that Faculty, yet I do more reflect upon my Understanding by perceiving Pleasure, than by thinking upon my Will, or my Locomotive Power: if then the Perception of Pleasure be not a reflex Act of the Understanding upon its own Act, but by a direct Act perceiving another thing than its own Act, it can only be the Object of Understanding, and so cannot be the Act of it. Pleasure can less be an Act of the Will, because it is the chief Object of the Will; for we have both Appetite and Desire to have Pleasure when we have it not, and to have it continued when we have it: and therefore being the Object of the Will, it cannot be the Act thereof; for the Will doth less reflect upon it self or its own Acts, than the Understanding. If Pleasure were

an Act of the Will, it behoved to be in our Power by a sole Act of the Will, for Pleasure is no such Perfection as the Will of a natural Man cannot reach: If then by willing Pleasure without other Assistance we could have Pleasure, who would be so stupid as to want it at any time? But I do evidently perceive, that I can no more bring forth Pleasure by willing it, than I can bring forth Light in Darkness by willing it to be; but Pleasure results from the Perception of the pleasing Object by a kind of necessary Emanation, which I cannot directly hinder, but by diverting my Mind from that Object, and applying it to another that can impede the Thoughts of the former. I perceive my self to be in the like condition as to Grief or Pain, which is a kind of Grief which I can neither make nor mar by willing it, without applying my Mind to another Object, diverting it from that Object that was the cause of Grief, and applying it to another Object strong enough to exclude the former, and which can excite an opposite Passion, as Admiration, which will sometimes wholly take away the most violent Grief or Pain, or Pleasure in, or desire of another Object: And there are but few so Masculine Minds, as can by this indirect way take away great Pain or Sorrow, tho many may allay or lessen it. Therefore Pleasure and Sorrow are not Acts of the Will or Affections, nor are to be numbred among Affectious, but are common Results arising from them, and from other Objects, and are the Means of Reward and Punishment, Happiness and Misery, without which Creatures could be capable of neither.

I may thus safely reason by Inspection in my own Mind, and from the specifick Equality of other Men, conclude the like of them: But I ought with much more tenderness and trembling to make Inferences of the Will of God, and yet I know no other Mean to apprehend God's Will, but by his own revealing it, or by resemblance of Man's Will, whom he hath declared to be made after his own Image, removing all Imperfection in the Will of Man. So then I conceive God's Pleasure neither to be an Act of his Understanding, nor of his Will, but a distinct Act resulting from his Knowledge of himself in his Divine Perfections, Decrees and Dispensations, and in the Effects of them: And seeing this Knowledge is unchangeable, so must his Pleasure be, and so must his Will be of the continuance of that Pleasure, as it results from the natural or moral Perfection of his Creatures, in which his Pleasure differs from the Pleasure of Creatures, who cannot necessarily have the Objects of Pleasure. His Pleasure also is infinite, and can be no greater, nor no less, intensively, tho it may be extensively; for he delights not only in the Idea of his Creatures when they exist not, but he does also delight in the Works of his Hands when they do exist, yet doth no more fully delight, nor is more happy when they do exist, than before.

The infinite Perfections of God, and the infinite Pleasure thence resulting, admit of no Grief; in which also his Pleasure differs from the Pleasure of Creatures: and we can no otherwise understand Expressions ascribing Grief to God, than as we understand those which ascribe to him a Face, a Heart, Eyes or Hands, that is, by Resemblance or Similitude. Yet it is truly and properly said, that
God

God taketh no Pleasure in the Evil of Sin, and yet he hath no Grief arising thence, but Displeasure; and it is the Divine Prerogative, that he doth take Pleasure in good Things when they are, but hath no Grief or abatement of his Pleasure when they are not; whereof great Souls have some shadow of Resemblance, they can take Pleasure in all things so far as is congruous to their Principles, inbred or infused, and yet have no Grief for wanting of them: and therefore have more noble Minds than the Stoicks, who do endeavour to eradicate all Pleasures, that they might not be grieved by the wanting of them, which is only fit for weaker Minds who find in themselves that Effect.

I have great aversion from the Thoughts that any Will of God should be ineffectual, which I cannot see consistent with his Infinite Perfections; and therefore I do not apprehend that his Commands, Prohibitions, Institutions or Laws, are Acts of his Will, but of his Pleasure or Acceptance, which is his Pleasure in those things that are offered to him, which he doth not reject: Otherwise they could not be without effecting the thing commanded or ordain'd, but being Acts of his Pleasure, they do oblige the Creature to be obsequious, and by the annexed Penalties and Rewards according to his Pleasure they become Divine Laws, and they are the Ground of his rewarding and punishing Justice, whereby his Will may be exercised about them to apply Rewards, Punishments or Remission, which are ever effectual. Tho the Will of Creatures is not productive of Natural Effects, yet it is productive of Moral Effects, not only by Promises, whence there arises a Right or Power of Exaction, but in Dominion and

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Upon the Will and Pleasure of God. 75

Property, which by the Law of Nature is transmitted by the Will alone, but the Will of God must have the intended Effect; and therefore it is not God's Will, but his Pleasure that is implied in his Commands and Laws; so that there is never a Discrepancy between what is expressed and what is meant.

These Thoughts are very futable to those two eminent places in Scripture. *For I have no Pleasure in the Death of him that dieth, saith the Lord.* And again, *As I live, saith the Lord, I have no Pleasure in the Death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil Ways; for why will ye die, O House of Israel?* Here is a Command to turn expresly attributed to God's Pleasure, not to his operant Will, which could not have failed in the Effect to make them to turn; but their turning and their living were both pleasing, and their not turning and dying were also both displeasing unto God. There can be no doubt concerning their turning or not turning, but it may be more doubtful, how God should have no Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked, or that it should not be by his Will, seeing it is the Execution of his Justice; and I am satisfied that it is his Will, as it is an Act of Justice, but not simply and in it self. There is no Difficulty that a just Judg may at once, not only have Pleasure in, but may will the Death of a Malefactor, but would be very far from taking Pleasure in, or willing his Death, if it were not by a necessary Act of Justice; but on the contrary, would have Pleasure in the continuance of his Life: tho it be said, God will have all Men to be saved, the former Texts clear it to be only God's approbative Will or Pleasure.

I am convinced, that it must be a dangerous Error to conceive, that God willeth the Death of his Rational Creatures, as being in the order of Nature prior to the permission of Sin, or that he hath Pleasure in it without consideration of Sin, in the order of Nature antecedent; which I can conceive no way reconcilable with these Texts: For if it should be said, that God hath Pleasure in the Misery of a Creature, as an Act of his Sovereignty or Freedom; if any can please themselves, in that there is no Contradiction they cannot reconcile, yet that were no way consistent with the Sincerity, Bounty or Goodness of God, and far from representing him as infinitely amiable.

I think it far from giving Satisfaction, or from making a difficult Objection from that Metaphysical Maxim, *That which is last in Execution, is first in Intention*: which is very improper to be applied to God, whose Intentions are all together, and hath its Exceptions even as to Creatures. For a Law-giver doth not first intend the Death of his Subjects by a Capital Law, neither at all intend their Death simply, nor can he so take Pleasure in it, if he be not a Tyrant, and yet is pleased in the Execution after the Capital Crime deserving it. But the blessed and benign God doth never intend the Misery of his Creature abstractly and simply; for his last End is his own Glory, whereunto the Misery of the Creature is no Mean, but his Act of Justice upon the sinning Creature; neither is Sin willed or intended by God, who exerciseth no other Act in it, but Permission, which is immanent, having no positive extrinsick Effect but Restraint, and over-ruling of it, and upon the occasion of it, doing holy Acts for his Glory; so that all the

Joins

Joins of that Objection are enervated.

There is another eminent Difference between the Will of God and our Will; we do oft-times wish that which is impossible, as that that which is past were recalled, or that we might enjoy all sinful Pleasures, and also the Favour of God and Blessedness. There is properly no Wish to be attributed to God; for tho sometimes he doth express himself as wishing or wondering, that is only to speak to Children in their own Language, signifying what is pleasing or displeasing to him.

It is our Imperfection, that because our narrow Minds cannot comprehend many things at once, we form abstract Notions of things, having all the Attributes in which many Individuals do agree, and having none in which they do differ: And as these Notions are in our Understanding, so are there general Desires in our Will, which cannot agree to the Omniscient God, and yet he oft-times speaks to us in our own Language, as if he made use of such Notions or general Desires, whereas he conceives or wills only Individuals.

We do also frequently exert conditional Acts of Will, or those Acts which School-men call *Velleities*, whereby we do not absolutely will, but only in such contingent and uncertain Cases; for if these Cases were certain, and to us certainly known, it were no more a conditional Will, but an absolute, not to take a present Effect, but when that Case occurred. This Imperfection must also be removed from the Will of God, to whom no Case can be uncertain, and yet he oft speaks to our Capacity in Expressions conditionally conceived; and therefore these appearing Conditions
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are truly Terms, tho they may be as Conditions to us, to whom they are uncertain.

I pity those who make so evil use of God's Condescendence to speak after the manner of Men as to represent God as wishing a thing past had not been, or having general or conditional Acts of his Will or Decree, which yet the Authority of Men and Prepossession make many to cleave unto.

The Decrees of God are commonly attributed to his Will; I shall endeavour to extricate my Thoughts concerning these, as may most agree with the Infinite Perfection of God, when I shall meditate upon God's Dominion exercised in the Election and Salvation of some of his Creatures, and his just Rejection and Punishment of others.

MEDITATION VI.

Upon the Power of God.

OMniscience, Choice and Intention would come far short of the glorious Idea or Image of God: He must also be a powerful, yea an All-powerful, Almighty, or Omnipotent Spirit, whereby he hath Strength and Ability to bring every thing to pass that is possible; therefore it is said God hath spoken once, twice have I heard this, *That Power belongeth unto God.* The Reduplication imports a strong Asseveration, and of God alone it may be said, that Power belongeth unto Him; the Creatures have it only by Gift, and in measure: and

and tho it be their own as to other Creatures, not as to God ; for as to Him it is but as the *Peculium* of Servants, which their Master can take from them at all times without Wrong.

Power is the Principle of Action or Operation, as these are distinguished from Thought and Intention ; which tho they be Acts of the Understanding and Will, yet they have no transient Operation, of which Power is the Principle. These Operations may be in the same Subject, but not in the same Faculty ; the Understanding operates on the Will, and the Will on the Understanding of the same Person, and both Understanding and Will, Pleasure and Grief, are Acts that have their own Activities, that may be called Powers, but for distinction are better called Faculties ; but Powers strictly taken as distinct from these Powers, may be either necessary, which can never be out of act, or free, which can exist when they operate not ; and it may either be immanent in the same Subject, or transient, terminate on another Subject ; and may be either natural, that is in the Nature received by Creation of its Subject, or adventitious, as an Habit acquired or infused ; and in some cases it is absolute, in others it is limited, that is, doth not fully exercise it self, by resistance of another Power, or by the free choice of the Person that hath it ; such is a moral Power, which will operate no further than is congruous to the Operant's other Perfections or Pleasure.

The most perfect Power is that which can work all that it can will, but doth work no more than which it doth will ; and this only is the Omnipotent Power of God, it doth not only extend
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to what he actually willeth, but what he could will; and therefore the Power of God doth far exceed that which he actually willeth or intendeth, that is, his absolute Power which hath no Bounds: for tho he limits the Acts of his Power by all his Moral Perfections, and by his liberty of Indifferency, yet the Power it self is ever the same, abstract from Good or Evil; he doth not abstain from doing Evil for want of Power or Might to do it, but because it is unworthy of, and unbecoming his glorious Nature: and tho his Power could counteract it self, his Wisdom would not admit it; yet the Exercise of his Power is as certainly regulate by his Holiness as if he had no Power to do otherwise: And therefore when it is said, that it is impossible for God to lie, the meaning is, that it is not simply, but eventually impossible, that is, it is as certain he will not do it, as if he could not do it.

God's Power is to be considered as it is in the Faculty, or in Act; in Act it is exerted by his Will to have present Effect, as in the Faculty it is exerted in his Purpose or Intention of that which is to be, and the Complex of all these is his Omnipotence. *For thou hast created all things, and by thy Will they are and were created,* where *θελημα* is better term'd Will than Pleasure.

The Perfection of God's Power imports that it must be inexhaustible, or then it behoved to cease and fail, which holds both as to Quantity and Quality. If God should create a Body so great that he could add nothing to it, then his extensive Power were exhausted, and would cease, so that he had no extensive Power: Or if God gave an infinite Strength, Pressure or Motion, his Power

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of giving that Strength were exhausted, and should cease: Therefore God cannot do all that he can do, that is, he cannot actually do all that is in his absolute Power, because he cannot will it, thereby to terminate his own Perfection, whereby his Power is regulated by his Wisdom.

I know the Notions of the School-men endeavouring to clear the Power of God, have much obscured it, supposing real Beings eternal and necessary, and imputing to their Nature the Cause of Impossibility, by reason of their Incapacity; they are not satisfied that these Entities be but *entia rationis*, the Fiction of Man's Brain by Resemblance, being as when Darknes is apprehended as a colour like to Blacknes, but they will have them real Entities; and their Imagination which hath a kind of Omnipotence in these Notions, proceedeth to make a whole Frame and Scheme of their own coining, giving to a multitude of such Entities their different Attributes, and thence deducing innumerable Conclusions, all which must be eternal Verities. So that God by Creation gives only the Existence of Things, whose Essence was eternal, and so are the Essences of all things that are not inconsistent, tho they were never to have Existence: And of late some have asserted, that the real Existence of Matter, and all its Properties are eternal. For supposing this World had never been, or were destroyed, yet it's impossible to conceive but there behoved to be Longitude, Latitude and Profundity, which are inseparable from a Body.

All these are but the Births of Man's Brain, inconsistent with the Infinite Perfections of God, incroaching upon his Power, his Freedom, his

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Wisdom.

Wisdom. On his Power, that he could not annihilate any thing beside himself; on his Freedom, and the dependence of all things upon him: For if these eternal Entities were freely from God, he could have forbore to create them; if not, then they behoved to flow from him by Emanation, and so their Being did not depend upon him; if they were freely from God, yet they were not by Creation, for that gives Existence, and they have found no Term to express how they were from God, but the Wisdom of God is exerted according to his Decrees of Creation and Providence.

It is sufficiently clear, that Possibility is only an extrinſick Denomination from the Power of God, having no extrinſick real Object, more than the Imagination can give to its Object; or that the ſight of an Object can operate ſomething real in it. As to the eternal Verities that are not concerning the Eternal God, they import only an identick Implication in the Terms whereby the Subject is ſuppoſed to be of ſuch a nature in which the Attributes are neceſſarily implied; as that every Triangle hath three Angles, which is no more than that every Triangle is a Triangle, or that every Triangle hath an Angle, which is an identick Proposition to each of its Angles, but inadequate to the whole: which imports no Reality, or absolute Entity; but only that whenever there is a Triangle, it muſt have Angles, but doth not import that the Triangle or Angles have a Being, or are real, neither is there any more Reality. That our Fancy cannot apprehend a *non ens*, but by reſemblance of an Entity, and ſo it apprehends Vacuity, as a Body, having Dimenſions, which im-
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ports no more Reality, than when it apprehends Darkneſs as Blackneſs.

Therefore God's Power is not circumscribed by Poſſibility or Conſiſtency, as by the Narrowneſs or Incapacity of the Object, but becauſe the Divine Perfections cannot jar or counteract one another.

There is another no leſs groundleſs and inconſiſtent Imagination, That God by his Power preſerves himſelf, and that he is the Cauſe of his own Being; whereas God neither has nor can have a Cauſe, and Preſervation is never competent but to that which had a Cauſe, and is a dependent Being.

The regulated Power of God abates nothing of its Infiniteness, becauſe the Exerciſe of that Power is only limited by his Will and Choice, not by the Power it ſelf, which ſtill remaineth when it acteth not. God's Power is regulated by all his active Perfections, as by Will, by the unchangeableneſs of his Decree, by his Purity and Holineſs, by his Bounty and Mercy, by his Juſtice and Fidelity, and by his Truth. And as it is ſaid, it is impoſſible for God to lie, not by his abſolute, but by his regulate Power; ſo it is no leſs impoſſible he ſhould change his Purpoſe, or his Works according to it, or that he ſhould not be good, juſt, faithful and true.

God's Power is exerted not only according to his Will, but (for any thing I can perceive by Reaſon or Revelation) by the ſole Acts of his Will, whereby he willet any thing preſently to be, which the Scripture expreſſeth *by the Word of his Power*, and that he commanded, and it came to paſs; not by ſuch Commands as he gives to the Rational Creatures, which do but expreſs his Plea-

sure and their Duty : But a Command to Things to exist must import his present Will, and therefore the Word of his Power must be such a Word of Command, as when Christ said to the Leper, *I will, be thou clean, and immediately his Leprosy was cleansed.* He both proved that the Divine Power is exercised by sole Will, and that himself was God.

God's regulate Power by his Wisdom operates by the easiest and most accommodate way, and doth nothing in vain, that is, not requisite for the End proposed ; but if the End proposed be not only the Production of such an Effect, but with it the manifestation of the Greatness of his Power, he would choose the way fit for that End, and not for the Effect only ; as when he increased the Oil that sustained *Elijah*, and the Widow of *Sareptah* : but he followed a more natural way when he fed him by the Raven, whose swift Wings could soon reach places where the Famine had not reached. Christ in preserving *Lazarus* might have prevented his Death, but he shews that he did it to glorify God. So he did feed the five thousand and the four thousand, by multiplying the Loaves and Fishes, tho he could have sustained their Strength a more accommodate, but a less evidently miraculous way : Yet God will not alter the ordinary course of Nature, tho thereby some Inconveniences arise to his own ; he worketh by the Powers of Nature, without Creation or Miracle, by preserving the Vigor of the Powers he gave ; and he doth over-rule the voluntary Powers, whose Effects he ordinarily alters, by giving Inclination to do those things they would not otherwise do, whether as to a single Act, or to a kind of Acts,
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by stopping and diverting them towards other Objects, or by permitting them to misapply their natural Powers in that which is evil.

I know no Warrant to pray for the change of Weather, but in extraordinary cases, or to exercise Faith about these, any further than concerns the Mind to make a good use of them.

Many have stumbled at God's Power of Creation, and therefore that God behoved to have a Subject to work upon which were eternal, which the more propagated the Opinion of the impossibility of Vacuity, and the infinite Extension of Matter, tho the Authors of it do no less stiffly maintain Creation than others do; That God is not the Author of Sin, tho he be the principal Actor of it: but that eases not the Difficulty, unless they suppose also that Angels and Souls are but the Motions of Matter, which some are so grossly absurd as to affirm; or that they are eternal, which others more famous have professed; or that they are Particles of the Divine Nature, which is yet more absurd than any of the rest, supposing an extended and divisible Deity. Is there any Inconsistency, that that which once existed not, should after exist? How much must they derogate from the Power and Glory of God, that would attribute nothing to him, but to give Matter, Figure and Motion, and that not by an intrinsic Principle, but in the same way that he operated the first six days? These Men had better quit their Grounds than keep them with such Consequences, and yet it is from Consequences that they take them up, which might be better misbelieved than these, tho they had far more probability both from Sense and Reason; but if there

be Incomprehensibility in either case, it ought least to be applied with so great Derogation to the Power of God.

This Power working immediately by the Act of the Will, is an incommunicable Perfection of God, and a part of that Glory which he will give to no other ; and therefore it is impossible that any Creature could create, and no more consistent, than that God should make more Gods. Whatsoever is effectuate by sole Will, is an Act of Creation, whether it be the Production of a Substance, of a Power, yea, or of a Mode or Accident, or any thing above the Powers of Nature or Grace.

Therefore no Creature can be any more than the Instrument of working a Miracle, and that only when God willeth the individual Act ; and no Creature can have a Power to work Miracles of any kind, as the Creature willeth, or that God should work a Miracle at the choice of the Creature, which were a Dependence unbecoming his Majesty. We must not think that the Faith of Miracles was an Arbitrary Habit, as when Christ said to his Disciples, *If ye had Faith as a grain of Mustard-seed, ye should say to this Mountain, Be removed hence, and cast into the Sea :* it imports no more, than that God at that time, for Confirmation of the Gospel, would make them Instruments of some particular Acts of supernatural Power, as he moved them, yet not at their Desire, but his own.

There is a groundless Imagination that hath much spread it self, That God hath given a Power to all Men, or to all Christians, to produce Effects in Creatures, by their firm and full Perswasion and Desire that these Effects should be ; and that they
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are not such Effects, is, because few or none attain to that Perswasion; and so the very Power vanisheth and were frustraneous, and inconsistent with the Wisdom of God, that doth nothing in vain, as well as with the incommunicable Power of God.

I pray God Men would advert and consider, what ground there is to believe that God hath given a Power to a Priest or Minister, that at his Desire, so oft as he pleases to express the words of Consecration of Bread and Wine in the Eucharist, the most stupendous Miracles should then arise of course; or that by their Consecration the Elements should have a Power or Efficacy to confer Grace, or otherwise to confirm it, than that by the solemn Preparation of the Heart, and the earnest Prayer of the Creature, God would more readily grant their Desire than at other times, or how by applying the Water in Baptism, at Desire Original Sin should be forgiven, or Grace should be given; which incroacheth not only upon the incommunicable Power of God, but upon his Wisdom, that he should give Grace to all that were baptized, which in the most part would prove frustraneous by being lost.

They do not a little derogate from the Omnipotence of God, who imagine that the very Nature and Essence of a created Will doth inseparably imply, that God cannot otherwise determine it but by perswading; yet no Perswasion can be so strong but it can reject it, and choose the contrary, whereby they fancy that they can clear God from any Accession to Sin, even by Permission; as if his Purity could not be preserved, but by the loss of his Omnipotence: So that God has

done all that is in his absolute Power to make every Rational Creature holy and happy. Yet the Pretext is vain: for it cannot be imagined, that God should be so mean an Orator, that he could not persuade Men to go to all Nations to preach and spread Books, persuading them to embrace the true Religion, which yet he hath not done; and yet he hath done all that he could do, not by his absolute Power, but by his regulate Power, by his most wise and holy Decrees. They might with more Pretext have said, that God in his Freedom and Wisdom, had decreed that he would make no farther use of his Power, but by Persuasion; yet that would have incroached upon his Wisdom and Sovereignty, that he hath made Creatures which he could not effectually govern; so that it is without all ground in Reason or Revelation, that he hath so decreed.

It is a very brutish Pretence, that it were a brute Power, and not rational, to infuse Habits or Inclinations in Rational Creatures; seeing these infused Powers act at the Judgment and Choice of Reason, though in some cases without Hesitation or Deliberation, are Creatures persuaded to desire their own Well-being, or Parents persuaded to love their own Children, or any to pity the injured miserable.

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MEDITATION VII.

Upon the Oneness of God.

IT is impossible and inconsistent, that there could be more Gods than one, both for the Omniscience and the Omnipotence of God; for God is capable of no Imperfection, and therefore is impassible: He knows not by any outward Impression or Manifestation, but from Reflection upon his own Nature and Decrees, by which he knows what will be the Effects of the Capacities he hath decreed to give to Creatures, and by his own over-ruling them for his Glory. Therefore there can be no more Decrees but those which are in that Omniscient view; if there were any other, they could only be known by extrinſick Manifestations, wherein God behoved to be Passive: So neither are such Decrees possible, nor the Actings of them, nor could they be known in a way consistent with the Divine Perfection.

It is as evidently inconsistent there could be more Omnipotents than one; for if they were equal in Power, none of them could be Omnipotent, for they could resist one another, and so have no effectual Power; and if they were unequal in Power, the weaker could not be Omnipotent.

The Omniscience and Omnipotence of God are his most evident Perfections, even by the Light of Na-

Nature; and his Oneness is fully and frequently asserted in Scripture.

Scripture hath also revealed the Trinity in the Divine Nature, which is the Foundation of the Salvation of the Elect, carried along through the whole Current and Oeconomy of the Divine Decrees and Dispensations relating to Mankind, from the Beginning revealing that the Seed of the Woman should bruise the Head of the Serpent, and by all that is said of the Messiah in the Old Testament, and of Christ in both Testaments. But it is declared to be a Mystery, and the greatest Mystery, ushered in with an unparallel'd note of Attention, ὁμολόγησμενως, *Great is the Mystery of Godliness, God manifested in the Flesh.*

Therefore the Trinity of Persons must be consistent with the Oneness of God; and it must be a nearer Oneness than that of Individuals of one kind, yet not such an Oneness as if there were but one Divine Person, Hypostasis, or Subsistence of the Divine Nature.

It is too great Presumption for any in the State of Mortality to determine the manner of the Oneness of the Father, Son and Eternal Spirit, which is so clearly declared a Mystery near the close of the Canon of Scripture, never unfolded after in it.

The Trinity hath been asserted and owned with the greatest Firmness and Forwardness in the purest State of the antient Christian Church; and the least Derogation attempted against it, by the *Arians*, hath been condemned with Abhorrence, by the most Eminent and Orthodox Fathers, and by the Determination and Solemn Confession of Faith by the Council of *Nice*; and it is amongst the most incontestably Catholick Doctrines of the Universal Church,

Church, owned by all National Societies of Christians in the World above the course of a thousand Years.

Augustine and some others of the Fathers have attempted to give some Resemblances of the Trinity in Unity, though he still acknowledgeth it to be a Mystery they could not fully comprehend.

So *Augustine*, in his 15th Book of that Treatise he wrote upon the Trinity, saith, " That we have
" a Representation of the Generation of the Son,
" by the Father, in that he is called the Word of
" God ; as all Idea's are conceived by Words of
" the Mind, so God's Idea of himself and his Decrees, is his Word essential and substantial :
" For all that is in God, is God. The Son is also
" the Character of his Person, his Image ; the
" Brightness of his Glory, his Wisdom that was
" with him from Eternity. *He says also*, That
" the Proceſſion of the Holy Ghost is his Love to
" Himself, by his Idea of Himself with his whole
" Decrees ; and that all the Persons of the Trinity
" are Wise and Powerful, by the same Power and
" Wisdom, because they have but one Godhead.

The Generation of a Son doth not import an Imperfection or Inequality of the Nature of the Son more than of the Father ; much less doth the Generation of the Eternal Son imply an Inequality of the Son with the Father, or a dependance of his Being from the Father, as if he needed Preservation like Creatures : Yea all the Persons are increated, without any Cause, and so Self-existent and Co-eternal.

The Errors of *Socinians* are much more abominable than those of the *Arians* ; the *Socinians* acknowledged

knowledg nothing of the Son before he was conceived in the Womb of the Virgin.

The Light of Nature was ever sufficient to confute the Multiplicity of Gods, and to convince that there could only be one God. Albeit the Multiplicity of Gods did far prevail in the World, it was long before it did prevail, and not until God had given Men up to their own Ways, because of their Wickedness against the clear Light of Nature: for *they were given up to believe Lies, because they did not receive the Truth* (which by the Light of Nature they knew) *in Love*, to live according to it. The knowledg of one God was not alone among the Hebrew or Jewish Nation, as the Scripture maketh evident in *Job* and his Friends, among whom there was so much clear Knowledg of the Divine Perfections, and even of a Saviour, and of a Resurrection, which are not deducible from any inbred Principle by the Light of Nature, and therefore they could not want Revelation; yet we have no ground to know any Communication between the Hebrews and them: Neither were there a few Persons indued with that Light, but a City and Common-wealth, having Judges and Counsellors that sate at their Gates.

Balaam also knew and acknowledged the only true God, not by Communication with the *Israelites*, there being a vast distance and no Communication between *Aram* and *Egypt*. The three Wise Men of the East, that were led by a Star to come to *Bethlehem* when Christ was born, could not possibly by Astrology have discovered the Birth of the Mediator; and therefore did neither want Revelation nor a miraculous Sign: Neither is there any ground to believe that they were Idolaters, but that

that they knew and worshipped the true God ; and it is highly probable that they were not the only Persons of their Country that did so : Yet they did not desire (for ought I know) to become Profelytes of the Jews. Neither is there ground to doubt that *Moab* or *Ammon*, the Sons of *Lot*, or *Ishmael* and *Abraham's* other Sons by *Keturah*, or *Esau*, their nearest Posterity were convinced that there was but one God ; nor could their Posterity be soon brought to believe a Plurality of Gods : So that we have no ground to doubt that the Knowledg of the one God did long and largely propagate it self in the World, though through defect of History the Particulars be little known. I do not hear of Idolatry before the Flood, the cause of it in God's just Judgment is attributed to Mens corrupting of their Ways, and the wickedness of their Works.

After the Flood, the Notion of one God did long remain, as appears by the common Name of *Baal*, or Lord, which was long almost universal ; and the several Nations that worshipped *Baal* gave him different Epithets, according to their apprehension of his Attributes, of which there is frequent mention in the Scripture: So the *Moabites* God was *Baal*, without addition ; the *Sidonians* also called their God *Baal*, so did the *Canaanites*. Some Nations called their God *Baal Berith*, that is, cursing *Baal* ; others, *Baal Gad*, *Baal Hamon*, *Baal Meon*, *Baal Peor*, *Baal Hanan*, *Baal Hazor*, *Baal Hermon*, *Baal Perazin*, *Baal Zebub*, the God of *Ekron*. Places also were denominated from *Baal*, as *Baal Perazin*, *Baal Shalisha*, *Baal Zebub*, *Baal Zephon* ; and *Bell* of the *Babylonians* is but a different Dialect of *Baal*: but that which was the Name of one God with different Epithets, did easily

sily come to be apprehended as so many Gods, yet the several Nations did not worship many Gods but their own. So after the Captivity of the ten Tribes, those that were planted in their places being plagued, conceived it was by the Anger of the God of that Place, and therefore sent for the Jewish Priests to appease him. The Greeks were the first that worshipped many Gods, and after them the Romans; for then the Souls of Men eminent upon Earth were supposed to be cooptated among the Gods in different Orders; and as the Nations and Places had Interest in them, they had Confidence in them, and became forgetful of the true God. After arose Images, and the relative Honour and Worship attributed to them, not only to the Images and Pictures of these Deified Men, but also to those Bodies, wherein the Gods were supposed to delight, and to reside. It is not imaginable, that so many Men of Discretion and Spirit, could with direct Worship adore inanimate Creatures, or the meanest Brutes or Plants, but that they thought they were delightful to, and resided in by Deities; and so the Sun, the Moon, Planets, came to be worshipped, even by those who did not believe that they had Life, or Understanding, or were Bodies informed by a Deity, but that they were the Residences thereof; yet the ignorant Vulgar gave direct Worship thereto: The Earth also was worshipped, and particular Mountains, Vallies, Rivers, Islands, where evil Spirits had appeared; but where they had fixed Oracles, they liked better to have the Worship immediate to themselves, as more congruous to Human Reason, and more difficult to be dissuaded. The Vulgar did not so soon give direct Worship to
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Pictures, as to Statues representing these imagined Deities to the Life, not only in the shape of Man, but in other terrible Shapes, in which the Devils did appear, as hath lately been evident among the Savage People in *America*, who have their evil Gods, who appear in Bodies of terrible Aspect, and oft-times severely beat them, and therefore they worship them with howling and great Terror. Other evil Spirits transformed themselves into Angels of Light, and appeared benign and favourable both to attain their Adoration and Trust; and both pretended an Omniscience, and gave Responses of the most uncertain and important Events of which they had most probable Conjectures, knowing the Interests and Inclinations of those Persons who had Rule in publick Affairs, and on whom they had Influence; and in other things, giving dark or dubious Responses which might be applied to any Event.

The Insolence also of some powerful Men made them affect to be adored, and esteemed Gods, which the Heathen Roman Emperors frequently did; and some of the most flagitious of them were so impudent, as to be adored when alive, and at distance, and had Temples and Altars consecrated to them. The misapplied Gratitude to the Inventers of those things that are of great and common use to Mankind, or those who were admired for their Dexterity in Government, or Gallantry in War, gave their Ghosts the Esteem to be accounted Gods, Demi-Gods, or Heroes, unto which evil Spirits were very concurring so to seduce.

The Poets with their Poetical Fictions, and the Pleasantness of their Verses, did powerfully work upon

upon the Imaginations of People, and thereby radi-
cate and increase the Belief of these Absurdities;
yet they kept still a Distinction and Subordination
to the great God, whom they called *Zeus*, as the
Fountain of Life. They did also attribute to their
Gods the greatest Vices and Infirmities of Men, as
Sleeping, Recreation, Consultation, Faction, In-
trigues, Quarrels, and not only upon their own
Interest, but as they parted different Nations and
Persons: The more judicious counted these but
Fables; and though few durst express their Mind
of the only true God, for danger of the seduced
Rabble, yet many of the Philosophers did. There
were few of these false Gods that had the Dedi-
cation of Temples, but were worshipped at Ri-
vers, Mountains or other places, from which
Voices or some extraordinary Signs were heard or
seen there; at last it came to that height of Ab-
surdity, that all believed that wheresoever they
would make up an Image, or a Statute, a Deity
would take up Residence there, and be their Pro-
tector, and answer their Prayers. Yea the ruder
sort ador'd Stocks and Stones, and the vilest of
Creatures, as Deities, without the Opinion of any
resident Spirit; so that not only every Nation,
but every City and Family had their different
Gods.

These Abominations came to that height, that
the World became ashamed and wearied of them,
and would have quit them, if their Priests, who
had Honour and Profit by them, had not co-ope-
rated with evil Spirits to support them. The
Romans made it an Interest of State to acknow-
ledg the Deities of all the Nations that they sub-
dued, the better to keep them under Obedience.

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It was not Reason, but Interest that supported the Plurality of Gods. The Silver-smiths of *Ephesus* did with Tumult and Fury cry up *Diana* of the *Ephesians*, but their Leader did more ingenuously tell those of his Trade, than the rest of the Multitude, that by making the Shrines of *Diana* they had their Wealth.

In this Condition was the World (except among the Jews, where Religion was turned to a meer Formality, and corrupted with Man's Inventions, pretended to be Divine Traditions) when Christ came to bring Life and Immortality to light, which did hardlier obtain with the Jews than with the Gentiles, who were become so irrational in their Worship; and therefore the great Apostle of the Gentiles doth not make use of Signs and Miracles, but of Reason and the Light of Nature, to convince them to know the only true God: For they sought Wisdom, but the Jews could not be convinced without Miracles, to forsake their Ceremonial Worship, which they became grossly to mistake, as if it had been a perpetual Institution, sufficient of it self to purge away Sin. So the Light of Nature concerning the only true God revived and made way for the Gospel, whereby the Multiplicity of Gods is no where to be found but among the barbarous Nations, who kept no Correspondence or Commerce with the rest of the World, such as the wildest *Tartars*, the *Chinenses*, *Japoneses* and *Americans*.

The clearing up of the true meaning of the Old Testament from the Jews fond Mistake of the Prophecies of the Messia, convinced many even by the Light of Nature, that God behaved

to be just; but if, without Satisfaction to his Justice, he could have pardoned one Sin, he might have also pardoned all Sin, and so have been without Punitive Justice: therefore there was necessity that the Messiah ought to suffer for Sinners. The Antiquity and the Reasonableness of the Christian Religion, broke much of the Obstinacy both of the Jews and Gentiles; and the Grace of God so far prevailed, that a great part of the World imbraced and cleaved unto the Christian Religion upon its own account, not only without, but against all Worldly Interest, in that they did even exceed in the desire of Martyrdom.

But when the Roman Emperors accepted of, and established the Christian Religion, whereby worldly Interests did attend it; in a short time the Roman Empire (which then did extend it self to the far greatest part of what was known to be habitable of the World) in a great part received it more as the Law of the Empire, than as the Law of Christ, and were instrumental to make it look as like the Pagan Superstition as they could, whereby great Corruption both in Opinion and Practice did ensue. In place of the Heathenish Sacrifices the Eucharist was made the Sacrament of the Altar, the Presbyters were made Priests; and in place of the Heathens Demi-Gods, came the Canonized Saints, and not only their Ghosts in Heaven, but the Relicks of their Bodies upon Earth were brought in to share with God in Adoration, without any other but a verbal Distinction; for both Prayers and Praises were plentifully perform'd to them, and multitudes of Temples dedicated to them. Albeit *Peter* even when present would not suffer *Cornelius* to kneel before him, nor

Paul

Paul and Barnabas those who offered to sacrifice to them, convincing them with that one Reason, *That they were Men*: Nor would the glorious Angels accept of such Service, as being fellow-Servants. None of these did insist with a *Distinguo*, that they were not worshipping them with λατρεία, but with δαλία; neither is there any Precept, or one Example in all the Scripture, of praying to an absent Creature. I know nothing can be pretended, but that when the Scripture was published there was no canonizing of Saints; and it's very far from evidence, that all who were canonized, were truly Saints, much less that their supposed Relicks were true; if then Men be worshipping some damned Spirits, if that be not Idolatry I know what can be; but there is no ground of Confidence that no Pope hath err'd in canonizing, which being a matter of Fact, they do not pretend Infallibility in it. I wish these Men would seriously consider, how it is possible to shun the attributing of the incommunicable Perfections of God to Creatures, the same Hours of publick Devotion being common through that whole Saint-worshipping Church. If some Millions be at once praying to the same Saint, can meer Human Nature be raised to that height to hear all those at once? when there is not the least ground to believe that they can hear any one of them: And suppose their groundless Invention, that they see all *in speculo Trinitatis*, yet they cease not to be such a Multitude reflected to their Knowledge at once; so that they must make them Gods, or else they must acknowledge themselves Idolaters. And on their own Grounds it is yet more strange, that they wholly neglect *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Job, Sa-*

muel and *Daniel*, whom God hath singled out as the strongest Intercessors, and *Moses* and *Aaron*, whom God hath canonized, the Scripture calling him the Saint of God. If any Creature were to be worshipped in absence, there were most to be said for worshipping Angels, which yet is expressly forbidden, and with the same Breath all Worship which God hath not required. As the Heathens divided among their Gods the several Offices by which they might be useful to Men; so they do exceed them in attributing to particular Saints their several Offices, not only to Men, but to Beasts, to all the parts of Men, and all their Diseases, without the least Pretext of Reason: they do not pretend (even by their unwritten Traditions) that God hath declared any such thing, or that these Saints have so declared; so that they must not only order all the Saints upon Earth, but all the Saints in Heaven. If the Saints be adorable, how comes it that every one adores what Saint he pleases, and neglects the rest? And by what Warrant do they assign them their Tasks, if it were their Duty to worship all, as they do some? The Burden of the Jewish Ceremonies were a small matter to theirs.

The Singularity of the Deity is not inroached upon by the blessed Trinity, being in Unity in one individual God, as the Word of God hath fully expressed it. It is indeed a Mystery, for the Knowledge of which we have no inbred Principle, but it is a proper Object of our Faith. In many Points of the Christian Religion, the Light of Nature goeth a great length in the way of Science, by a rational Deduction from self-evident Principles; and the exact Harmony between the Light
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of Nature and the Scripture, gives a mutual Confirmation of the truth of both, yet both are rather Science than Faith, until God by his free Grace endue Men with a sense of Spiritual Things, which the natural Man cannot discern, because by Nature he hath not that Sense by which they are perceivable.

There might have been other Objects of Sense, and other Senses of these Objects, and therefore we need not think it strange, that God giveth a new inward Sense to the Regenerate only, by which they believe the Trinity in Unity, and the Incarnation of the Son of God, the Covenant of Redemption and Grace, the Mediator's willing and free Submission of himself to suffering in his Human Nature even to Death for Man, that God's Justice might so be satisfied, and his Purity and Abhorrence of Sin vindicated; that free electing Love might take place, in which the Elect could attribute nothing to themselves, but all unto the free Grace of God. The Light of Nature doth or may perswade all Men, that God is merciful to penitent Sinners, and yet that he is also essentially just; and if it could have consisted with his Justice, without Satisfaction thereto, to pardon one Sin, there could be no reason why to pardon one more than another, and therefore God might have been without Punitive Justice. Justice also differs from Benignity, that it keeps a just Proportion between the Sin and the Punishment; and therefore if all Sinners deserved Exclusion from God's Favour, none of them could satisfy for himself, much less could any one receive Pardon and Reconciliation by the Sufferings of all the rest: but here the sharpest Natural Reason is confounded and left in the dark till Revelation and Faith step in,

discovering the Mediator Θεανθρωπος, whose Humanity made him capable to suffer, and the Dignity of his Person gave his Suffering an infinite Value, and the outward Revelation of it might induce a strong Perswasion, that supposing God had so done, the Consequence were good, and that it were likely that he had so done; but to have a true Faith and full Perswasion of it upon Tradition written or unwritten, requires more than Reasoning can infer.

Hence it is, that Compulsion is adhibited for Religion so far as the clear Light of Nature goeth, because there is the strongest Evidence beyond any other natural Duty, in which none are spared from Coaction and Punishment, but they are rather heightened by pretending the want of Perswasion, because the Light of Nature is full and clear; and the diverting the Thoughts, or shutting the Eyes of the Understanding can no more excuse, than if a Man should deny that there were Light at Mid-day, because he would not open his Eyes to let it enter. But we are not in that Capacity as to supernatural Light; and therefore it is both against Religion and Humanity, to compel Men to supernatural and institute Religion, where they believe not these revealed Principles, from which ordinary Capacities cannot refuse clear Inferences which require not long Deductions.

Those who pretend the Unity against the Trinity of the Deity, because they cannot comprehend it, must deny the Incomprehensibility of God, which his Word so often asserts, yea the whole Tenor of the Word: And their pitiful Evasions do too strongly evidence, that they only own the Scrip-
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tures lest they should be odious, and that they have no more than Natural Religion, but not the Christian Religion, because they imagine God can forgive Sin without all Satisfaction to his Justice; which is against the Light of Nature, which can neither admit of an injurious God, nor of a Justiceless God.

Those who from the Trinity wave all Reasons against a carnal Presence in the Eucharist, as if they were resolved either to keep both, or quit both, do too much strike at the Foundation of Christianity, there being no Parity, Consequence, or Connexion betwixt the two. The Trinity is the Fountain of the only true and saving Religion, whose Branches and Streams run through the whole Scripture; Can the literal Interpretation of one Expression, never re-iterated, never inculcated in all the Scripture, pretend like Evidence? where the contrary Sense is evident, That whosoever eateth the Flesh, and drinketh the Blood of Christ, shall never perish; therefore it cannot be a carnal eating or drinking of the Body and Blood of Christ, which is to be understood in that Sacrament, which wicked Men are capable of, as they acknowledg.

MEDITATION VIII.

Upon God's Freedom.

I Have no doubt that God must be free; but the many subtle Contests among the Learned concerning Freedom or Liberty, have made so many Distinctions of Liberty, that I must consider them before I can distinctly know the Freedom of God.

Freedom is a Relative Term, and doth imply something from which, and something to which a Being is free: As, 1. From Constraint, whereby I understand a Force or Power, making any thing act contrary to its free Choice or Inclination. 2. From Restraint, whereby any thing is hinder'd to do that which by Choice or natural Inclination it might do; both these relate either to Acts, or to the Power of Acting: that which is under no present Force, is so actually free, but is not absolutely free, because it may be forced; but Opposition or Resistance doth not abate Freedom, unless at least it can diminish the Effect of the Power of that which is free.

Thus God must be absolutely free, because there neither is nor can be any thing that could abate the full Effect of his Power.

The second Distinction of Freedom, is not in respect of extrinick Force, but of intrinick Propension, whereby any thing cannot alter its own Power, or the Effect of it, either because it is void of Perception, and so cannot know when and where

where to alter its Activity; thus all Creatures which have any Activity act, except those which are sensible; so Fire cannot determine its own Activity, tho it may be restrained: or constrained, and in this sense Brutes have some kind of Freedom, because they act variously, tho they be neither restrained nor constrained, and so they determine their own Power, according to the Impressions on their Sense, Memory, or Imagination: Albeit (according to their Opinion that think they have no Perception) they act as inanimate Creatures; yea some deny all Activity to Creatures, but commonly Liberty is opposed to natural Necessity.

The third Distinction of Freedom, is in respect of voluntary Necessity, whereby Rational Beings are free from absolute Necessity, by which they act not as Brutes, but upon comparing the things eligible, they can only choose or act one way. Thus I perceive in my self, and believe that all others so do, that I can choose nothing but under the Appearance of some Goodness: I cannot choose my own Misery; or if it fall in my Consideration, I cannot but desire my own Happiness; and I am sure I am not in these so free as in other things, to which I have a natural habitual Propension, that will ordinarily prevail tho not always, and which may be eradicate, as the other cannot; as the Goodwill to Children, the Reverence of the eminently Excellent, the Compassion of the Oppressed.

The fourth Distinction of Freedom, is from the Prepossession of those strong Propensions, which are like the Instincts of Brutes; but these do not exclude Freedom, but diminish and burden it: for there are sometimes Acts contrary to these Propensions,

pensions, and therefore there is no singular Act but might also be contrary ; yet while these Propensions remain, the whole Acts can never be contrary, and therefore as to the Prevalence the Creature is not free: for there is a kind of Impossibility to do that always which sometimes can be done: As he who shooting at a Mark, and hits it once, hath the same Powers by which he may at any time hit it again, and yet it is impossible that he should so do a thousand times on end ; and therefore it's necessary that he should not so hit it, at least it is certain by a moral Certainty, because God could so influence him as ever to hit it. Thus it's said, *Can the Leopard change his Spots? no more can ye who are accustomed to do evil, learn to do well.*

Liberty then must be a Power to determine and choose, which cannot be hindered by extrinsick Force, or intrinsick Necessity, which may be three ways. First, When there is a meer Indifferency, and the Chooser is *in æquilibrio* compared to a Ballance, wherein neither Scale doth decline, but both are in the level, and this is called the Liberty of Indifferency, when there is no Reason or Motive for the one part of the Question to be determined more than for the other: As when one hath a Choice of two things so like, that he can find no difference, and therefore his Liberty in choosing is a Liberty of Indifferency: As if two Pounds of the same Mass of purified Gold or Silver of the same Shape be set before a Man at equal distance, with Power to choose either, he will be troubled with his Freedom, and would be glad any other might determine him, or that a Lot might determine him, and he will endeavour to pretend some
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Motive of Preference; as if he thinks the one nearer, to choose the nearer, or that which is on the Right-hand, as nearer the working Hand, or that on which the *Acies Oculi* first falls. The second Freedom is, where the Scales are not level, but the one preponderates, yet so that he who chooseth hath Strength to bring the Scales to the level; for if he cannot, there is no Freedom, as in the choice of Good or Happiness: If the declining Ballance be superable, there is a difference if any Inequality be in the Scales; for then that Inequality will be constant, tho the Weights put in the Scales be equal, which represents the Choice where there is Prepossession by natural Propension or Habit; if the superable Inequality be in the Weights put in the Scales, the choice of the weightier will be with some more pleasure than the choice of the other; and thence arises a Freedom with Inclination, and a Freedom against Inclination, and a Freedom without either, which is the Freedom of Indifferency. To illustrate this Distinction of Freedom, I consider *Adam* in his Innocency, choosing the Fruit of the same allowed Tree in Paradise, he could not find a Difference among them all, and so his Choice was free by Indifferency. But suppose the Fruit of the forbidden Tree did more provoke the Appetite than any other, as it's like it did, both from *Eve's* words, and because it imports little Devotion to God when there is a meer Indifferency: Therefore at the first view, the natural Affection would incline to the forbidden Fruit, tho it might easily have been overcome, by minding Gratitude to God who did forbid it, and the Penalty of the Breach of that Command: Therefore the Choice
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of eating the forbidden Fruit was with Inclination, but the Choice of forbearing it, had been against the Inclination of the sensible, but with the Inclination of the rational Appetite. Before the Fall, *Adam* had the Scales of Good and Evil superable, but after the Weight of Sin made it insuperable to him, and to all his sinful Posterity, till they were restored by Grace, then the Inclination became superable, but the Choice of Good is ordinary contrary Inclination; yet there is still in things meerly indifferent, a Liberty of Indifference, but in the State of Glory there shall be always a Choice of Inclination, which through the Grace and Power of God shall never alter.

There is no small Contention among different Perswasions concerning the Freedom of Men, whether in Mortality they have any Freedom, and in what Subject it resides, whether in the Understanding, the Will, or the Affections: Some will have Man to have a Freedom in all things, and that it is essential to the Will, that God cannot determine it by infusing any Habit or Inclination, but by Perswasion, which it may effectually resist and reject. Others attribute a Freedom to Man in indifferent things, and in the choice of one Sin rather than another, and in the forbearing or not forbearing a particular Act of Sin; but that before Grace supervening, there is a moral Impossibility of doing any good and holy Work, and never a Freedom against the Divine Influence, which may be sufficiently proved by Reason and Revelation, but it is not proper here to be debated. All do agree that a Man is not fully free as to his outward Acts, which are liable to Restraint and Constraint, and there is thence no small Influence on the inward Acts; for

for thereby Self-love excludes the thoughts of these Motives which are opposite to Force in doubtful things; but in things evident and certain, no extrinsick Force can alter or hinder the inward Impressions or Acts, but the more a Man is constrained or restrained, the opposite Desire is the stronger, tho' outward Dissimulation be procured.

Then comes the Question, In what inward Faculty or Power Liberty resides? Some place it in the Affections, when they become pliable to the Will; some in the Will only without Dependence on the Understanding, but that the Will commands the Understanding, if not what to judge, at least when to judge, or think: Others place it in the Will with Subordination to the last Judgment, determining that it's now fit to act or forbear. But where there can be no real or imaginable Difference, the Mind doth not by a positive Act suspend its Choice, but privatively cannot choose, because there can be no Judgment of Preference; but that which appeareth indifferent, may with more Attention and Meditation appear not indifferent. Some also place Liberty all in the Understanding; yea some apprehend the Will to be nothing different from the last Act of the Understanding, determining what is fit to be chosen, done, or forborn at the time of the Resolution.

I need not now insist in discussing these, but I conceive the Enumeration is not full; for there are some Acts which are neither from a Power in the Understanding, Will, or sensible Appetite, but are immediately subjected in the Soul or Spirit, as Pleasure, Grief or Pain, which result from the Perception of certain Objects, and are not the Acts but the Objects of the Understanding, Will and
Appetite.

Appetites, yet certainly are Acts of the Soul; such are all the Acts which the School-men call *actus suppositi*: and therefore a Man is only simply free, when he is neither outwardly nor inwardly overpowered; and yet that Freedom can neither be an Act of his Understanding or Appetite, for these being unchanged, outward Force may hinder his Freedom: The Understanding is a contemplative, but not an active Power: The Will or Appetite cannot compare, and so cannot prefer one thing to another; but the Spirit by the Understanding perceives and compares, and the Spirit chooseth by the Will; for it understands by the Understanding, and wills by the Will. The Will of Creatures hath no Activity without it self, and cannot suspend the Judgment, unless the Judgment be unclear and suspend it self, in not concluding what is best to do or forbear; yet may it determine what is best to profess, or to prosecute by Meditation, or by Action.

I shall now return to the Freedom of God, which can no otherwise be known but by Revelation, or by Reason from his Works: Hence it is evident, that God doth not act all that he could by his absolute and infinite Power; for then there should be continual and infinite Alterations of all Creatures, new Worlds should be every moment created, and those that were created annihilated; new Kinds, new Individuals, new Perfections should be continually multiplied and destroyed: Therefore God doth not act by an intrinsick Necessity, but determines the Effects of his own Omnipotence.

This may confute their vain Curiosity, who enquire, why God did not sooner create the World? Why he created but one World? Why no more
Kinds?

Kinds? no more Individuals? no more Perfections? And thence are brought to conjecture, that there must be more Men than are upon this little Clod of Earth, not descending from *Adam*, and it may be not by Generation, yet in other things like to us, which may be without Sin, as the Angels, and live upon the Moon, or other dark Planets, like the Earth; yet still Millions of these would have no Proportion to the Infinite Power of God: therefore Creation must be an Act of God's Freedom of Indifferency, and so must be the Life and Endurance of the brute and inanimate Creatures; and there is no Parity in God's acting in these, and in the Acts of his Justice, and of his other Moral Perfections. They are more brutish that imagine any Creature to have had its Being from God by Necessity or Emanation, as many have thought the World to have so been eternally from God, which would also import that God hath not Power to create more than he hath created, or less than he hath created, which some have been so absurd as to imagine; besides those that quibble upon the Impossibility of any other thing in respect of the Decrees. Seeing God executeth all his Decrees by his sole Will, his Will must be necessarily distinct from his Omniscience, or any Act of his Judgment in which he differs from all Creatures, whose Will alone hath no extrinsick Operation.

God's Freedom in the Acts of his Moral Perfections, are not by Indifferency, but commonly by Inclination, and yet are free from absolute Necessity, albeit not from conditional Necessity, or necessary Consequence; for so whatsoever is acted while it is acting is necessarily acted, not simply, but conditionally, because it cannot be both acted
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and not acted at once. So also all the Acts of God's Moral Perfections become conditionally necessary, by his immutable Decree or Promise, and some others are necessary by the Congruity with his Natural Perfections: Therefore he hath said that he cannot deny himself, not in relation to his Existence, but to his Perfections; and therefore tho he hath Strength and Force sufficient for the contrary Acts, yet he will certainly and unchangeably ever act as is becoming and worthy of his natural Divine Perfections, and therefore he hath said, that it is impossible for God to lie. Revelation gives us Evidence, that some of God's Actings are not so with his Inclinations as others; so it is said of his Punitive Justice, *That it is his strange Work, and that he delights not in the Death of a Sinner, and that he delighteth in Mercy above all his Works.*

There is an evident difference between the Acts of God's Justice and his Truth, and between his Bounty and Mercy; his Truth is precise without all Latitude, his Justice holdeth exact Proportion with deserving; but his Bounty and Mercy have no Bounds, nor any respect to deserving: And therefore his Grace is free by way of Eminence, as being more free than his Justice and Truth.

I know some make no difference between Liberty and Spontaneousness, and make it consist with absolute Necessity, and that such is the desire of Happiness, which some think the freest Act, but without ground: for then the brute Creatures should yet be more free than the rational, and the inanimate than these; and the Difficulty is not loosed by adding a rational Spontaneousness, that is, which follows an antecedent Judgment, for then there were no place for Justice, Rewards
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or Punishments, and yet Rewards are greatest when the good Acts are most against Inclination: There is no Reward or Punishment for indifferent Choices, scarce any Reward for the desire of Happiness, little for the Compassion of the miserable, less for the Love of Children, Self-love, and others, as they are nearer or further from Necessity. The Martyrs that would not deny God before Men to save their Lives from Torture, have the greatest Glory in Heaven.

I know Liberty uses commonly to be defined, a Power (all things requisite to act being ready) to do or not to do, which can only extend to that plenary Liberty of outward Acts, but not to the inward Acts, Choice, Desire, or Intention, which come not under the Term of doing: and suppose the Term might be stretched even to these, the chief Requisite is the Act of the Judgment, determining it fit to do, or to intend, desire, or to attempt to do. If we suppose these to proceed without an antecedent Judgment, determining it fit that they should proceed, then it could only be a brute Appetite, and not a rational, which implieth an antecedent Judgment, which yet may be so prompt without Hesitation or Deliberation, as if the Will acted without an antecedent Judgment, preferring one side of the Contrariety, or Contradiction.

I conceive Liberty may be better defined the Hability of Self-determination upon a rational Motive. This will agree both to the Liberty of God and of Rational Creatures, and to the plenary Power both of the outward and of the inward Acts, or to the Liberty of the inward Acts only, wherein Liberty doth chiefly reside, and which are exempted from Force and Necessity. I call it

an Hability, which imports more than a Power, which sometimes is not in a present Capacity to act, and in the Schools is called a Power *in actu signato*, or *in actu primo*, as a sick Man hath a Power to walk: The Rule by which the Power is determined, is the last practical Act of the Judgment about that which is in Consideration, whether it be the doing, attempting, desiring, intending, or choosing of something that is in the natural Power, whether it be in the lawful Power or not; which therefore I understand to be a Judgment, not of what is judged to be just, but what is judged to be fit in the present Circumstances, or to be either good, as just, profitable, or pleasant. Liberty consisteth not by one single Act, but by different Acts, upon different Occasions or Objects. There is also a Freedom preferring one thing to another in choosing it, and rejecting the other, or the rest, if more than two be in the Thought; and this the Learned call a Liberty *ad contraria*, as the former is called a Liberty *ad contradictoria*, the acting as is judged fit comprehends both. And it is always even in the most inconsiderate Acts; for tho there be no Deliberation or Hesitation, yet there must be a Judgment, that the thing is fit to be chosen or done, which differenceth these Acts from the Acts of Brutes, whose Appetites follow immediately upon their Perceptions, without any Deliberation or Judgment.

God alone is intirely free, against whose Choice there can be no Resistance; but he can always hinder Creatures not only to effectuate their Choice, but even to choose, diverting their Thoughts from any particular Object; and as he is free from all Force, so from all Necessity, in reference to

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Creatures: for an Hypothetick Necessity to choose or act sutable to himself, or as he hath decreed or promised, is not a Necessity more than every thing is necessary while it is: But he hath given Creatures Inclinations importing an absolute Necessity, and he can, and oft doth so incline them to any particular Act.

God's Freedom is ever determined by his Moral Perfections, so that he will never do any thing which is not sutable to, and becoming his Natural Perfections, which thereby is called worthy of him, not by the worthiness of Demerit, but by the worthiness of Congruity or Condignity.

God's Freedom in timing the doing that which is sutable to his Divine Perfections, is nearer to his Freedom of Indifferency, than his forbearing things unsutable to his Divine Perfections; for all his Workings relative to his Creatures are congruous to his Natural Perfections, yet he did not work the same from Eternity, nor till the Time determined by his Decrees. He was eternally blessed in himself before any thing was created, and would have so been tho nothing had ever been created: Yet the time of Creation, the number of the Kinds or Individuals, the Kinds and Degrees of their Perfections, Powers, Faculties and Inclinations, or the Extent and Endurance of his Creatures, are all from his Liberty of Indifferency.

Such a Freedom was incommunicable to Creatures: for if God had created Angels and Men with such Propensions, as thereby all their Actions had been necessary, as are the Acts of inscient Matter, and of Brutes; tho all their Actions had been good, yet they were neither capable of Vertue, Praise, nor Reward, nor had they been

sited Objects upon which the Divine Perfections might have been displayed and glorified ; nor had they had natural Powers to have acted otherwise, and therefore their Freedom had not been like to the Freedom of God.

God did create Man and Angels with Principles and Capacities to act acceptably to God, and suitably to their own natural Perfections, yet having natural Power to do Evil by Omission or Commission ; but they were not capable of Infallibility, that they could never act unsuitably to the Divine Perfections, or their own Natural Perfections, whereby they would have been wholly independent in their actings on Divine Assistance, which had been inconsistent with the Infinite Perfection of God, which could be no greater : Therefore in neither case were Rational Creatures capable of such a Freedom as that of God's.

Tho no Rational Creature could be thus infallible by its own intrinsic Perfections, God in his free Bounty hath manifested that he did decree, that many of his Rational Creatures having a Freedom to do Good or Evil, should never do Evil, and that only by his own assistant Bounty, whereby he increases their Propensions to Good, and their Aversions to Evil, in every Circumstance wherein they were in hazard to have erred after they were glorified, or confirmed.

The glorified Angels and Saints are in themselves yet fallible, and if they did fall, were punishable ; for the Obligation to Duty is not abolished or abated, nor the Punishment due for Transgression thereof. It is justly and truly said, If the righteous Man depart from his Righteousness, his former Righteousness shall not be remembered,
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which doth not import that he shall depart: For it is still as true, that if it were possible, even the Elect would be deceived and fall from Grace, which imports that it is not possible. Therefore the Impossibility of the Elects falling from Grace, is but an Impossibility by the Event, and not by the proper Capacities of the Creatures, not by simple Impossibility from their intrinsick Perfections, but from the Goodness of God exerted by his Omniscience, that he knows all the Circumstances in which they were in hazard to fail, and by his Omnipotence, that in these Circumstances he could so increase their Propension to Holiness and Aversion to Sin, that they would not fail, and that freely, and not by a natural Necessity.

These things appear to me very clear, and consonant to Reason and Revelation, and inconsistent with that perverse, but too prevalent Error, that the Freedom of Creatures does essentially imply, that they can only determine themselves, and may counteract all Perswasion; these Men admit of no intrinsick Alteration, which, in opposition to Perswasion, is called a Physical Influence of God.

Hence also it is further evident, that there is a manifest Difference between things that must be by an intrinsick Necessity, and things that shall be by Divine Bounty and Providence, and things that only may be; and that all these are clearly and distinctly known and foreseen by God.

MEDITATION IX.

Upon the Blessedness of God, implying his Self-sufficiency, Self-comprehension, his infinite Love to, and Delight in Himself.

THE Divine Perfections which I have hitherto contemplated, fall all under single Apprehension, without implying different Considerations, and there is nothing voluntary in them, but they are absolutely necessary, and do import no Act of the Will or Pleasure of God. But there are many other Divine Perfections immediately flowing from his Will or Pleasure relative to himself, or to other Beings designed to exist by his Purposes or Decrees. All these Perfections, in distinction from the former, are called Moral Perfections, and are morally good, as being the Perfections of God in all his Acts flowing from his Will or Pleasure.

The first and chief of these voluntary Perfections, is God's Love to himself, comprehending both his Good-will to himself, and his Delight in himself; supposing the Comprehension of his Nature, and all his Divine Perfections natural and moral, and all his Decrees and Dispensations.

Albeit there be no real Difference of the Divine Attributes or Perfections, yet there is that kind of Distinction which is called formal, which
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is not from meer Imagination, or alone from the Act of our Understanding, but hath a true Foundation; yea Revelation hath manifested a personal Distinction of the Trinity in Unity, of one only God, and of the Actings of these Persons with and towards one another, and of the order of their acting in Decrees or Dispensations towards Creatures, which God hath revealed not by single Expressions, but by the whole Context and Current of the Scripture.

There are three Divine Attributes frequently mentioned in Scripture, the Blessedness, the Glory, and the Honour of God; all these import more than what can fall under one single Apprehension. The Blessedness of God must imply God's Love to, and infinite Delight in himself; his Glory must import his Divine Perfections as they are manifested to knowing Creatures, who give him Glory in acknowledging his Divine Perfections; his Honour also must imply the high Esteem of knowing Creatures of his Divine Perfections, Decrees and Dispensations. God's Glory and Honour need not several Meditations distinct from the Divine Perfections in himself, and the Duty of his Creatures in acknowledging and magnifying the same: But the Blessedness of God ought to have a more clear and full Consideration, and is proposed as the Subject of this Meditation, that it may be more clearly apprehended wherein the Blessedness of God doth consist.

Blessedness or Happiness hath become a Subject of much Doubt and Disputation in relation to Rational Creatures, which hath mainly arisen from not adverting the Difference between a compleat State of Blessedness wanting nothing requisite thereto,

thereto, and between the chief and ultimate Ingredient thereof. Nothing can be called Blessedness which wanteth any thing that might breed Dissatisfaction or Grief to the Subject of it; For even tho' that which is apprehended to be wanting be impossible, and not reasonably to be expected or endeavoured, yet the very apprehension of its being requisite, and the desire and endeavour to have it, marreth full Satisfaction and Blessedness; There be many things, the having of which gives Pleasure, but the want thereof doth not raise Grief, and therefore cannot mar Happiness; and the more generous Minds are more easily happy than others, because they value less minute Pleasures, and so are happy by enjoying the greater.

The last Accomplishment of Happiness cannot consist in the Delight in, or Enjoyment of any thing that is not certain, either in its Existence or in its Perception. The most glorious Angels could not be happy by all their present or preterit Enjoyments, if they knew not surely that their Enjoyment would never be altered, which they could not know from their own intrinsic Perfections, but only from the Promise or declared Purpose of God perpetually to preserve that happy State.

It is very like that at the first Creation of Angels, God did not assure any of them to preserve them from falling, until they had given proof of their Faithfulness, which might have been the first rise to the Fall of those Angels who were not content with their Station, but thence became murmuring and malicious against their Creator.

Happiness may rationally be ascribed to many things because of their Connexion with others, from
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the Complex of which, Happiness doth result. As our Saviour in his solemn Sermon declareth many to be happy upon different accounts, which cannot be meant in Consideration of every one of them severally, but of their Connexion with others.

None of the Attributes of Creatures implying Imperfection, are to be conceived in God, as having Parts capable of Union and Separation, or as having Quantity by multiplying or diminishing these Parts, without which Bodies cannot be extended, or their Quantity augmented or diminished, their Parts continuing the same: All which Parts are impenetrable, not by any positive Power or Quality resisting Penetration, but by Incapacity to admit the Penetration of any created Substance, which can only be in the Interstices of Substances, but not in their Parts: yet God is Omnipresent and every-where; but whether by his Infinite Power only, whereby he can create and preserve Creatures without bounding that Power, or whether by another kind of Expansion different from the Extension of Bodies, is a great Depth, which hath never had a general Determination amongst Christians, tho there be a strong Inclination in the Mind of such an Expansion, which hath given the rise to that Imagination of the Immensity of a Body, not only in the visible World, but without it.

I dare not be positive to determine my self in it, yet I am clear, that tho it were, it could not infer a Difficulty to apprehend the Thoughts of God: For tho a created Substance having Parts, could not think, but only a Substance having no Parts; the Divine Immensity would not therefore exclude the Infinite Knowledg of God; seeing God hath

no Parts, and is neither capable of Division, or Union of Parts, nor of any Motion; for being every where, excludes Motion from one place to another.

The Blessedness of God doth imply, First, His infinite Perfections, which could not possibly be greater: for all Addition of Pleasure from the Existence of Creatures, is to God, like to the small Dust that casteth not the exactest Ballance, and is amongst these smaller Pleasures which do not make Happiness, nor doth the absence thereof raise Grief; for if it were not so, God could not have been blessed before the Creation: Yea, albeit God hath great Pleasure in his Decrees relating to Creatures, yet these Decrees are voluntary Acts of God's Purpose, and therefore God might have been blessed abstract from them.

Secondly; The Blessedness of God implies his Self-sufficiency, that is, that he had all in himself requisite to make him happy, without Dependence upon any Creature, or any Act relating to Creatures; and therefore his Blessedness is altogether independent upon Creatures.

Some learned Men in the Reformed Church, hold God's Independence to be his first and most eminent Attribute: But when it is considered, that Independence is an Attribute still presupposing something that is independent, as the Subject to which it is attributed, which can be no other than being a Spirit; for the Apprehension of God comprehends all his Perfections, and all that rightly can be conceived of him, and therefore must comprehend something which is as a Subject presupposing nothing, which is his being a Spirit. And therefore,

Thirdly;

Thirdly ; The Blessedness of God doth not only imply his Independence, that he hath no need of any thing beside himself to make him happy ; but it must imply his infinite Love to himself, that he will never communicate his Divine Perfections to a meer Creature, as he has oft declared, that he will not give his Glory to another.

God's Love to himself is infinite, and could be no greater, no meer Creature is capable of such Love ; for no Creature is made so perfect, but it might have been made more perfect, which required greater Love.

God's Love to himself is Self-love, which doth justly exceed the Love of all things else ; he hath given Self-love to his Rational Creatures, which kept in its Bounds, is not only lawful, but a requisite Perfection for the Happiness of those Creatures. But the Self-love of Creatures must not diminish the general Love to those of the kind, and must be inferior and subordinate unto the Love of God ; and when it exceeds these Bounds, it is no Perfection, but a Vice: and because it frequently exceeds its Bounds, the Name of Self-love simply expressed, is taken for a Vice, odious both to God and Mankind ; but God can have no Object more excellent and lovely than himself, and therefore his Self-love is good without Limit or Bounds.

Fourthly ; The Blessedness of God implies God's full Comprehension of all his Divine Perfections ; for tho he had them all, if he did not by a reflexive Act in order to his own Blessedness, consider them all, he could not be infinitely blessed.

Fifthly ; The last Accomplishment of the Blessedness of God, is his infinite Delight in himself, and in his own Divine Perfections and Decrees.

This

This View of all the Divine Perfections and Decrees together, is that Beatifick Vision, whence is that infinite Delight of God in himself, in which he is perfectly, eternally, and unchangeably blessed.

God in his Wisdom and Bounty bestows on his glorified Creatures a Blessedness, having some resemblance of his own, perfected in those Pleasures which are at his Right-hand for evermore; which must presuppose a State of these Creatures, having such Perfections that afford them full Satisfaction, that they do not desire any more, especially when Time is ended, after which there is no more Alteration to be.

This is that Beatifick Vision of Creatures, whereby they have a much clearer Idea of God than they are capable of in the State of Mortality: *For here we see darkly as through a Glass, but there we shall see Face to Face.* The Face of God is his Countenance, the shining whereof upon Creatures is the height of their Happiness, when there is no more fear of his frowning, nor of these Creatures failing.

These perpetual Pleasures at God's Right-hand, must presuppose the Creatures knowing by God's declared Decree, that he will never suffer them to offend him, or to fall from that glorious State: But it chiefly ariseth from their view of the Divine Perfections and Decrees, being then manifested, not only by Revelation, but by attaining their Effects.

Albeit the Happiness of glorified Creatures have some resemblance with the Blessedness of God, there is still an infinite difference and distance between the highest Happiness Creatures are capable

pable of, and the Blessedness of their Creator.
For,

First ; No Creature is capable of a perfect view of the Divine Perfections and Decrees, for these are incomprehensible by Creatures, so that they cannot be in their View or Thought together distinctly, but only in a general Apprehension of intire and infinite Perfection, which cannot descend to the Specialities implied therein ; whereas God's View of his own Perfections is distinctly of the whole. Creatures may in a great measure conceive in their Mind, or apprehend the Perfections of God, but God alone can comprehend them distinctly altogether.

Therefore it is that glorified Creatures will have an excellent and eternal Exercise of their Minds, by apprehending distinctly the several Perfections of God, and his manifold Decrees and Dispensations, which will yield fresh and renewed Pleasures for ever. We find by Experience that our Thoughts turning upon a few delightful Objects, give a fresh continuance of Pleasure, albeit the Perfection of the Objects be but low ; How fresh then, and how great must that Pleasure be, that hath the Variety of God's Existence and Nature in being a pure immaterial Spirit, and all his Divine Perfections natural and moral, and all his Decrees and Dispensations brought to an unalterable Condition ?

Secondly ; The Delight and Pleasure of God in himself is infinite, and is capable of no higher Degree, but Creatures are incapable of any infinite Perfection ; therefore their Delight might by the Power of God be made still greater, yet it is fully satisfactory in the degree that God freely
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gives it ; and tho there be different degrees of glorified Angels and Saints, yet all of them are satisfied without Envy, Emulation, or desire of more than what they do receive, after the Resurrection and Union of the Souls of Men and their glorified Bodies.

Thirdly ; The Delight of glorified Creatures is not upon Grounds from themselves, but from the free Gift of God ; nor from Perfections wholly in themselves, but in the Power and Love of God, preserving them from falling in all occasions of Danger.

MEDITATION X.

Upon God's Holiness or Godlikeness.

HAVING meditated upon the glorious Divine Perfections of God, which are natural, necessary and immanent, so far as my narrow Capacity doth reach and apprehend, and in that natural Order, whereby the Antecedent doth always make way for the distinct apprehension of the Subsequent, the first and absolute Attribute being a Spirit, all the rest being relative, supposing a Subject to which they relate, of which the nearest to the purely immaterial Spirit of God is Omniscience, and next thereto Activity by his Will, choosing and effectuating according to his Pleasure, and then his Omnipotence, extending not only to what he chooseth or willeth, but to all that

is possible and consistent, all which are in himself without any Cause, whereby he is self-existent and eternal, self-sufficient, infinitely delighting in himself, and thereby blessed; and as to all transient Acts absolutely free, and fully independent in his Being, Power, Choice or Operations: I come now to apply my most serious and humble Thoughts to his voluntary Perfections, the Effects whereof are terminate upon Creatures; and I have earnestly endeavoured to find the natural Order of these as of the former, which I perceive not only to be antecedent and consequent, but that they are as Causes and Effects, which doth not import that any thing in God hath an extrinsick Cause, or a real Multiplicity or Difference. I do conceive that God alone doth act immediately by his Being; some have extended that to Creatures, but if without Injury, I think not without Error. Supposing (for instance) that the Soul of Man perceiveth, judgeth, reasoneth, chooseth by its own Substance, as it is a Spirit, and that it is but Mens Fancy, that imagine superadded Powers, such as the Understanding or Will, wherein they seem as much to err in the Defect, as the common course of the Schoolmen do in the Excess, multiplying real Entities, as they imagine, as the eternal Essences and Attributes of these things that have existed, or do exist, and of the real being of things possible, that do not, never did, nor never shall exist. And supposing a multitude of Accidents really distinct from any Substance, and that the same individual Accidents are separable from one individual Substance, in which they are subjected unto another, and which consequently could subsist without any Substance, and so not differ from a Substance by
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subsisting without a Subject, but are differenced by having a fitness to perfect a Subject by actual inhering in it, and differing also from Modes, that these imply an individual Subject from which they are inseparable; yet they durst not be so gross as to attribute such Accidents to God, which indeed cannot escape to infer a Composition of separable things.

It seems inconsistent with a created Substance, to act by its Substance, or immediately. It is true, that if we suppose all the multitude of Species to differ by Substantials, and consequently by separably subsistent Parts, and so should conceive the Intellect and the Will to be such; then the Soul would substantially comprehend the Intellect and the Will, and must act immediately: but tho the Capacity to Reason and Choice be no substantial Parts, separable from the Soul, they may still be essential tho not substantial Differences, and then the Soul acts not immediately, but by the addition of these: and I conceive it an abusive Speech, and if properly taken, derogatory to God, that he could not withdraw the Power of Reasoning or free Choice from the Soul of Man, without annihilating its Substance, but only changing it unto another kind, which yet might essentially differ from a Brute, which cannot judg nor compare, no more than reason, but only perceive by Sense, and act by Instinct. It doth much more quadrate to the Glory of God, that he freely gave these Powers, by which the Soul hath the special Nature of Man, and not of Necessity.

That such Powers must be freely superadded to the Substance of Creatures, I satisfy my self with this Reason, that there are no Substances but
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Spirits and Matter, that all the Species of Creatures are by superadded Powers or Modes, which are not separable Beings; and therefore if a Spirit by its Substance can reason, choose, worship, or adore, then all Spirits behaved necessarily so to do; or if Matter, as such, could move or act, all Bodies behaved so to do: therefore something must be superadded to make the difference, which is neither Body nor Spirit; therefore it is the incommunicable Property of God to act immediately.

That the transient Acts of God's Perfections are Causes and Effects, it doth sufficiently satisfy me, that I do not unsensibly think of God, when I enquire, Why doth God punish Sin? and resolve that it is because he is just: And if I yet further inquire, Why is God unchangeably just? I cannot but think it is either because it is congruous to his glorious Nature to be unchangeably just, or that he is unchangeably just, only because he will be so. I see no reason for any third Ground or Rise, whence all God's Decrees and Dispensations do flow.

I know there be some who think that it would be derogatory to the Freedom and Absoluteness of God, if all his Dispensations did not arise only from his Will; but that very Reason infers the contrary Conclusion, because it brings a Reason why all must flow from God's Will, to wit his Freedom and Absoluteness, which yet are not his Will, nor from his Will, nor are they moral, but natural Perfections; and it is evident from Scripture, and acknowledged by all Christians, that there is a difference between God's Moral Commands, which are unchangeable, and his positive

Commands, which he hath changed; and consequently that there is a difference betwixt the Moral and Positive Law of God. So that in the Positive Laws or Commands, the Matter is indifferent, and becomes only morally good by and during the Command; as the Command to forbear the eating of the forbidden Fruit, he instituted Circumcision, and all the Ceremonies of the Levitical Law, and many of the Judicial Laws: therefore in the Moral Commands, there must be something more in the Matter commanded than in the other, and more than the Command it self.

When the Scripture saith, that God cannot deny himself, it cannot be restrained unto his Will, nor that he cannot deny that he doth exist, but that he cannot deny his essential Natural Perfections, by commanding or doing any thing unfutable to them.

The Scripture saith expressly, that it is impossible for God to lie; if this Impossibility were only because of his Will and Decree, then it should be impossible that God should not do all the Acts of Creation and Providence which he hath decreed: Yea, it would lead to that blasphemous Opinion, That God hath decreed, and hath or will do all that is possible for him to do, and that his Power is no larger than his Will; therefore the Impossibility of God's lying must not alone be because he hath willed or decreed not to lie.

Whatsoever depends upon meer Will, is ambulatory and changeable, by an opposite Act of the same Will, and both Acts would be equally good. So it is in the Divine Positive Laws and Precepts which are changed, without Changeableness in God, because the Change is futable to his Divine Perfection.

Perfections, especially to his Freedom of Indifference; and if he might so change his Promises, his Faithfulness, and the truth of his Expressions, no Creature could have any ground of Trust, which would overturn the Faith.

Were it not horrid to imagine, that God who hath freely from Eternity decreed, being considered as prior in the Order of Nature, tho not of Time, to these Decrees, or as abstract from these Decrees, were indifferent as to Truth and Falshood, Justice and Injustice, as he was to the creating of Creatures, or to the Manner, Kinds and Individuals of them? which some have rather inclin'd to, than to suppose that in the Direction of the wickedest Acts, God should not be an Actor, to maintain a Metaphysical Extension of his being the first Cause.

Some have thought that God is not capable of any Obligation, or Debt to his Creatures, nor of any other Justice, but that which is called distributive in Rewards and Punishments, because he cannot be obliged to give or perform to his Creature, and so not by commutative Justice: but tho that kind of Justice be commonly called commutative, because it is frequently exerted in exchanging of one thing for another, yet we must not measure things meerly by Names; for the Obedience of Children, and the Performance of every gratuitous Promise, is not by distributive, but by commutative Justice. The Apostle *Paul* accurately discussing that great Question, Whether Salvation be by Grace or by Works? doth clearly oppose God's giving any thing by Grace, to his giving on the account of Works, and saith in expresse Terms, *To him that worketh is the Reward*

not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt: here the Reckoner and the Rewarder is God, who accounteth himself Debtor of a Reward to him that worketh Good perfectly without failing.

I know it sounds yet more harshly to some pious and well-meaning Souls, to say that God governs his Actions by a Law, supposing it to import, that he is under a Law, which it doth not import; for God is neither under nor above his own Moral Law, for he is a Law unto himself: And in the narrow Sense that Law is sometimes taken, as it requires a Sanction by a Penalty, in case of Transgression, a Law cannot be attributed to God, but that is not essential to a Law; for many Laws even of Men, have only a Reward annexed and no Punishment, and others have neither Reward nor Punishment, but the Deeds otherwise done are only annulled, and made void or ineffectual.

A Debt or Obligation cannot be without a Law, for Law is the Reason or Cause of an Obligation, by which the Person obliged is determined, and ruleth himself, and therefore it is called a Tie metaphorically, whereby one is tied to walk only as agreeth with that Tie; so that unless we should say that a Debt or Obligation is without a Reason or Cause, we must acknowledg that where a Debt is, there must be a Reason of it, which is the Law.

It would sound harsher to these tender Souls, to say they worshipped a Lawless God. It breeds Horror to think how like these Mistakes would render God to Tyrants, who cannot hear of any other Rule of their Subjects Obedience, but *such is our Pleasure*, and who would have themselves thought to be above all Law, and to be tied by no Obligation to their Subjects.

I know it is like to be thought a bold and useless Curiosity, to enquire into the Cause of God's Decrees and Dispensations, who doth all that he will, *and who may say, What dost thou?* and who giveth account of none of his Matters. But God's not giving an account of his Matters, is not concerning the Rules of his Holiness, of which he gives frequently an account, but concerning the particular Means and Expedients by which he brings his Purposes to pass: neither is it the question, that he does nothing but what he will do; yea whatsoever he doth, he doth it by his Will: but the Question is, Whether he willeth and doth upon an anterior Motive, not from the Creature, but from himself? I mean anterior in the order of Nature. Nor do I think that it is required of all that are saved to search so high, but of those only to whom God hath given Capacities and Opportunities; for to whom much is given, of them much shall be required: And tho the simple Ignorance of these things will not be imputed as an Offence, Errors in these Matters are very dangerous; and therefore seeing they are so frequently vented in the World, it is not only profitable but necessary to prevent or cure Errors concerning the Representation and Character of God, Reason being given in Scripture so oft from such Grounds, and not from mere Will.

And beside, it is of excellent use to understand the Divine Nature, which raiseth and increaseth the Admiration and Adoration of God, and the highest, purest, and least selfish Love to him, and the greatest Reverence and Obsequiousness to his Pleasure: the meanest Capacity may love God, because he hath promised them Happiness by Repentance

and Faith ; and much more the Love of Gratitude may arise from the sense of his giving of these Graces, yet there is a small Proportion between the glorious Excellency of God in relation to a particular Creature, and his Glory shining forth to the whole Creation, and must produce a far greater measure of Love and Reverence, which are much weakened by attributing any thing to him unworthy of him. However none can justly blame me to clear my own Thoughts, and raise them as high as I can ; and I do bless God for the increase of Love and Reverence he gives me thereby.

I am persuaded that the rise of most of God's Decrees and Dispensations are from the Congruity thereof to his natural Perfections, as becoming and being worthy of such a Being : I say it is a Congruity to his natural, not to his moral Perfections ; for he is not just because he is true, nor true because he is just, nor gracious or merciful because he is just or true. But when I consider what is congruous to, worthy and becoming a Spirit omniscient, omnipotent, self-existent, all-sufficient, infinitely blessed, free and independent, and then put the Question to my self, Must not such a Being be just, exactly fulfilling all his Promises, encouraging and rewarding the Good, discouraging and punishing the Evil according to their Merit ? I am fully persuaded he must be such, not by a fatal Necessity, nor by meer Indifferency, but by a voluntary and free Choice.

And when I further pose my self, whether such a Being will only perform his Promises, reward and punish according to Merit ? I am convinced it is congruous to him to be good, bountiful, gracious and

and merciful beyond what his Justice requires, and that without any Bounds, as in his Justice, which precisely follows his Promise, or what is congruous for him to do upon occasion of the good or evil Actions of his Creatures.

When I consider, Whether such a Being will always express his Mind truly, and never deceive? I can have no doubt of it.

If again I consider, Whether such a Being will ever choose fitted Means for all his Purposes, and do nothing in vain? I am assured that he is infinite in Wisdom, and will do nothing in vain.

And lastly, when I consider, Whether such a Being will ever be constant in his Purpose, and be unchangeable therein, and in his Justice, Bounty, Truth and Wisdom? I know he cannot change in these, because they are all congruous to his unchangeable Nature.

By this Congruity I understand God's Holiness or Godlikeness, that is, that God acteth always like himself.

There is nothing more frequently inculcated in Scripture, than Godliness and Holiness, which are originally and principally attributed to God, and in Analogy to his Rational Creatures: it shall be the eternal Exclamation of all God's happy Creatures, Holy! Holy! Holy Lord God Almighty.

I do not take Holiness to be as a Metaphysical Abstract from all God's Moral Perfections, but that it is the precise and formal Reason, why they are morally good.

Holiness in the Creature (or Godlikeness which is the same) consists chiefly in the Creatures being Godlike, that is, imitating the Divine Moral Perfections, in being just, being true, prudent and con-

stant; but in other Duties of Holiness, the Likeness to God is more analogical, and less proper: The Analogy consists in this, that as God acteth always congruously to the Divine Nature, so the Rational Creatures ought to act congruously to that Nature, and those Principles that God hath freely imprinted in their Minds; so they ought to adore God; to obey him in all his Commands, to trust in him, and to be temperate in every thing, and to subordinate Self-love to the Love of God.

Holiness is also taken for the Destination of things to the Service of God, and separated from common Use, which therefore is called Consecration.

I know the Immediate Rule of the Creatures is the Will of God, obliging them to obey, not only what is congruous to the Divine Nature, or to their own Nature, but whatsoever positive Law or Precept God doth command; tho the Matter be indifferent, and that they may sufficiently be assured that he will never command any thing incongruous to himself; yet it is of great use to know the difference between Moral and Positive Commands; for the Glory and Amiableness of God appeareth far more in the one than in the other, albeit the Positive Commands of God do indispensibly require full Obedience, which is from an inbred Principle in the Mind of all Rational Creatures.

I am not troubled that it may be said, that the Scripture Phrase is most of the Perfection of God, and of his Justice, Goodness, Mercy and Truth; for all is still mentioned as his Holiness and Godlikeness, and many Cases do and may occur, that we cannot so clearly refer to these particular Terms, as we can know whether it be congruous
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for God so to do or not ; neither doth the Scripture expresse and define wherein Holiness consists, but by the Expression of Godliness, or Likeness to God : And altho Perfection be frequently attributed to God, yet Godliness is a more distinct Term ; for we must not explicate Godliness by Perfection or Goodness, lest we should fall in the Apprehension that hath misled many, that God would have shown more Goodness to have prevented all Sin, and that there must be more Worlds than this, at least more Species of Creatures than upon the Earth : but we must explain God's Goodness with Congruity to his Nature, which comprehends his Freedom, whereby it is not congruous to him to communicate all the Good he can, which would never terminate nor be stable, but that he acteth freely, and that it were impossible for us to know what Good he hath done or will do, if he had not revealed it. Some of the Fathers, and many since, have fallen into that Error, that God's Goodness doth not admit that he should punish any Creature eternally ; and tho the Scripture says the contrary expressly, they produce other places to prove that Eternity is sometimes taken for a very long Time.

Becomingness or Decency is vulgarly attributed to the Modes or Forms of Behaviour, and so it is said by the Apostle, *Let all things be done decently, and in order* ; which doth neither declare nor constitute that Decency as a kind of a Christian Vertue, but as a Recommendation of what is expedient. The Scripture maketh an expresse Distinction between that which is unlawful, and that which is inexpedient ; so that kind of Decency is a part of Civility. No serious Man can imagine that every

every undecent Gesture or Expression is a Sin. Hence it may seem that the precise Nature of Holiness cannot consist in Becomingness or Congruity to the Nature of God, or of Creatures, which could only amuse the Vulgar, who lay too much weight upon Words and Terms; as if the appropriating the Name of Decency or Comeliness to the least of Civil Vertues, in which there is no Speciality, did import that there were not an higher degree of Decency; but if Words import, those of the Learned must be of the most Importance. The Greeks, which were the learnedst of Nations, have no other word to express Vertue, but *το καλόν*, that which is comely and becoming; and therefore the Divine Vertues cannot be fitlier expressed than by *θεωπρεπεια*, and the Human Vertues by *ανθρωπρεπεια*. By the Reasonings in Scripture from what is becoming, God doth assure his unchangeable Justice, *Shall the Judge of all the Earth do unjustly?* And when the Apostle to the Hebrews gives the Reason why God did require the Suffering of his Son to expiate Sin, he saith, *For it became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of their Salvation perfect through Sufferings.* I stumble not that it may be objected, that it is an unwarrantable Boldness to be positive what is becoming the glorious Nature of God, and no less unwarrantable to make Conjectures thereupon; for such Objections (if true) would eradicate all the inbred and self-evident Conceptions of God, that he is benign, just and true, as to which the Mind seeks for a Reason; that seeing these are free Acts, Why is God unchangeable in them? Nor doth the Mind acquiesce, that he is
so

so unchangeable because he will be so; for it still urgeth that his Will is the most rational Inclination, and therefore the Question returns, Why doth he unchangeably will so? when this Return is made, that these are congruous to, and sutable or becoming such a Nature, that is rested in as a self-evident Proposition: For as God hath imprinted on the Soul of Man by Sense a self-evident Apprehension of Proportion, Symmetry and Beauty, of which no Man craveth, nor can any Man give an anterior Reason; so there is more Reason, and no less Clearness, that he hath given the like Evidence to the Mind in the Apprehension of what is congruous, sutable and becoming an infinitely blessed, and all-sufficient Being, which doth also appear in most other Objects, of which none do require a Reason, which doth best appear in Negatives, as that it is not becoming a Man to be fearful, or bashful, which yet is not unbecoming a Woman: Or that it is unbecoming an old Man to be delighted in Toys like a Child, or a Divine to be in a Warlike Posture with a Military Batton, or Plumashes; or a Judg to be partial, or unjust: as it is said of God, *Shall the Judg of the whole World do unjustly?* the Reason is implied, that the highest Judg cannot possibly do unjustly, not for want of Power, but because he is the highest Judg. May it not as well be said, that it is a Boldness for Creatures to be positive in determining what are God's Perfections, as what is sutable to a self-existent, self-sufficient, free and fully blessed Being to do towards Creatures? which do arise in the Minds of all that consider, tho they reach not all God's Perfections in particular, or never thought upon many of them, but on the comprehensive Conception of God.

That

That the Holiness of God and of Creatures consisteth in the Congruity of their voluntary Actions to their Natures; that they do such things as are worthy of their Natural Perfections, not by the worthiness of Merit; but of Symmetry and extension of the Usefulness of their Natural Perfections, is further confirmed by many Sentences of Scripture, perswading them to act from that ground; as Paul to the Romans saith, *Let us walk honestly, as in the Day.* The word translated honestly is *ευχεμενως*, that is, becomingly: And several Christian Duties are perswaded to be done as *ἡξιον* or *αξιον*, that is, pertinent, or worthy of the Actor. As also Paul to the Colossians saith, *We do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the Knowledge of his Will in all Wisdom, and spiritual Knowledge, that ye might walk worthy of the Lord, unto all pleasing.* And the same Apostle to the Thessalonians saith, *That ye would walk worthy of God, who has called you to his Kingdom.* And to the Philippians, *Only let your Conversation be such as becometh the Gospel of Christ.* And to the Ephesians, *I therefore the Prisoner of the Lord, beseech you that ye walk worthy of the Vocation wherewith ye are called.* And thereafter, *But Fornication, and all Uncleanness, nor Covetousness, let it not be once named among you as becometh Saints.* In all which, both the Knowledge of that Dignity, Decency and Congruity, is supposed rather than revealed, and is perswaded thence, and not merely from the Command. The Scripture attributes to God the Beauty of Holiness, and to the Mediator, that he is altogether lovely; and there is nothing it inculcates more than the Glory of God and his Majesty, all which are several degrees of Comeliness: for nothing can be nearer
Come.

Comeliness than Beauty, which standeth most in a Symmetry or Congruity, whereby the Eye of the Body or Mind is affected; and the proper Nature of Glory is shining or resplendent Beauty, and therefore in the highest degree is proper to God alone. Majesty is the Beauty or Comeliness of the Appearance and Deportment, manifesting Magnanimity and Magnificence, Stateliness and Prudence, and is only to be attributed to Sovereign Princes, and in the highest degree to God alone; and yet is wholly in Symmetry and Sutableness to what becomes that Greatness: and therefore Holiness or Godlikeness must needs comprehend the most transcendent Glory and Majesty in the Divine Deportment of God by his voluntary Actings, sutable to his Divine Natural Perfection.

MEDITATION XI.

Upon the Unchangeableness of God.

HAVING cleared my self concerning the Holiness of God, by the distinctest Conception thereof I can reach, I am fully satisfied that it is the source of all the Divine Decrees and Dispensations, and that thereby God doth ever aim and act like himself.

I do thence by immediate and necessary Consequence perceive, that God never hath, nor never will design or do any thing that is not like himself.

self. That were incongruous to, and unworthy of, and unbecoming the infinite Glory and Beauty of his Holiness, wherein he must be unchangeable, not by any fatal Necessity, but by his free Choice.

I know the Unchangeableness or Immutability of God may and uses to be further extended, and to be taken not only actively for the Unchangeableness of his Decrees and Dispensations, but passively for the Unchangeableness of his Being and Natural Perfections, whereby he is altogether impassible; because no Creature can have any Activity, which could have a Physical Operation upon God: Yea if we should suppose (that which is impossible) that there could be another of infinite Power, as in all things it would be inconsistent with the Deity, so evidently and eminently in this, that it could never be more powerful than God, and therefore he behoved to be able to resist all Impressions and Alterations from it. But Unchangeableness in this sense differs nothing from the Omnipotence, and other natural Perfections of God. The Unchangeableness I now think on is God's active Unchangeableness, whereby all his Decrees are sutable to himself, and all his Actings are unchangeably conform to his Decrees.

I know that in the right Apprehension of this, as in all other the Divine Perfections, there is great need of Wariness and Caution, lest one of them should be conceived to be inconsistent with, or incroach upon another; and therefore I might be apt to mistake (as others have done) the Unchangeableness of God, as if it were inconsistent with his Unchangeableness, that upon different occasions he should act differently. I have seen of late, and not without Abhorrence and Admiration
publish-

published in Print, by one that pretends to be a great Divine in the Roman Communion, that God is only a common Cause, working like the Sun, Moon, or Stars, without Consideration of any particular Circumstances, but that all Specialities are acted by Christ, whose Understanding being finite, as Man, cannot comprehend all things at once, and therefore the Specialities arise as things fall in his Thoughts.

It is another strange enough Misapprehension of the Unchangeableness of God, as if it did import, that he could not have Consideration of the Actings of his free Creatures in any of his Decrees, but behoved with as little Consideration of deserving to design the Rejection and eternal Misery of some, as of the giving of Grace and eternal Glory and Blessedness unto others. It were injurious to imagine, that Learned and even Pious, and for the main Orthodox Divines could have admitted so harsh a Character of the blessed and infinitely amiable God, if their Mistake of the precise Import of God's Unchangeableness had not carried them unto that Supralapsarian Way.

Others apprehend it must imply a Changeableness in God, if his Divine Perfections had any Effect at one time that they had not at another, and when they see Scripture and Providence full of the contrary. For instance, that the Power of God was not always exerting it self in Creation, or in the punishing of some, and pardoning, accepting and glorifying of others; yet to maintain their Misapprehension of God's Unchangeableness, they strain their Invention to find a Reconciliation, and say, that there was not any other Act of the Divine Will, Power or Perception, but his

his eternal Decree, from which alone all these Effects followed; so that the Act of Creation was only that Decree as breaking forth in its Effect: yea to exclude Changeableness in Knowledge, they must also allow, that in the beginning God knew not that he was creating, or that Creatures were brought forth, and not till then, which did import no alteration of the Perfection of God's Knowledge, because he did as clearly know all things that were to come to pass from Eternity, as when they did come to pass; yea, and knew no more as to the Matter, but as to the Being, future, present, or preterit: No Invention can avoid that God knows that the World was once to come, and now is, and that the Flood was to be, and is now past; Could they also give an account how the same Decree could take Effect by one Act of the Divine Will, and yet at so immense distance of Time? Certainly there was no Act of God's Power different from his Will in the Decree; and if there was a Power different from the Will, it did not then begin to exert it self, how then should that Act of the Will be efficacious, that from Eternity had no Effect till the beginning of Time? And how should the Will of the ending of Time be so long after the beginning, which could not be by the meer Negation of willing, but behoved to be by a positive Act of the Divine Will, that such Acts of the same Will should be longer without Effect than others? So that one Act of his Will should suspend the Effect of another; whereas the Scripture doth always distinguish God's Decrees from his Dispensations, and Working. Our Saviour saith expressly, *Hitherto my Father worketh, and I work.* Must we thence say, *Hitherto my Father*

Father decrees, and I decree? And tho it be said, that all God's Purposes take Effect, it is also said, that all things come to pass according to God's Purpose, which explaineth the manner of their taking Effect, not by his Purpose, but by the Performance of it, in working according to it.

The genuine and proper Subject of Changeableness or Unchangeableness, as to Acting, originally is in the Purpose, or Intention; for no rational Being can operate rationally, but by an Intention to work, whether the Intention be before, or with the Operation, and therefore is changed by the change of the Intention: Therefore God's Unchangeableness doth precisely consist in this, that his eternal Purpose or Intention, being fully suitable to his Divine Nature, could therefore never be changed, and by his Omnipotence it could never fail of the intended Effect: So that his Unchangeableness is not that he acteth ever the same thing, but that he acteth ever suitably to his glorious Nature, and doth unchangeably perform what he purposeth. No Creature could know God's eternal Purposes, Decrees or Intentions, or what his Will were, without Revelation, but by knowing what were congruous and suitable to the Divine Nature. Our innate Conceptions of the Divine Actings are chiefly in our Apprehension of what is suitable to the Divine Nature; from whence we infer his Unchangeableness, Justice, Benignity, Mercy, Faithfulness and Truth, which we do not perceive so soon, or so clearly as the other. We may and do oft doubt concerning several Dispensations, whether they flow from God's Justice, Benignity or Mercy, being yet very clear that they are congruous to his glorious and blessed Nature.

God's Unchangeableness doth not import, that he hath always the same Love of Beneplacence and Beneficence to his Elect, before they were converted as after, and when they fall in presumptuous Sins, for which he withdraws his Countenance, their Peace and Joy, and doth correct them, as when they consider their Ways and repent, and he cherisheth and comforteth them, albeit his Love of Benevolence to them is ever the same, because in all these he acts suitably to himself.

I abhor their Folly who think, that Sin is no more Sin, nor no more to be sorrowed for in the Regenerate, or that God hath relaxed his Justice, in making that which was Sin against his Moral Law to become no more Sin, which would indeed import a Mutability in him.

It is also a groundless and empty Notion, to infer from God's Unchangeableness, that there can be no more nor no less Motion in the World, than at the Creation, or that there shall be no more or fewer saved of Mankind, than fell of the Angels.

I do also admire and abhor their Error, who hold that God's Love of Benevolence to the same Creature can change, seeing it flows from his meer Grace, and from no good thing in the Object; Whence then should the occasion of the Change arise? This Imagination not only incroaches upon the Unchangeableness of God, but upon the Omniscience of God; for if he did foreknow all that every Creature would do, tho his Benevolence did arise from their Actings, yet it could not be from the singular Acts, but from the Prevalence. Were it then possible that from Eternity he should have Good-will and Hatred to the same Person? much less

less that he should have so many Changes of it? If he did foreknow that after the attainment of Grace, that Creature would finally forsake him, could it consist that he should have the Love of Benevolence to that Creature? The Lord hath said, *I am God and change not, and therefore the Sons of Jacob are not consumed: And whom he loveth, he loveth to the end*; which can only be understood of his Love of Benevolence, not of his Complacence: The Reason of the Difference is manifest, because his Benevolence is anterior in the Order of Nature, to any moral Goodness in the Creature, which are the Effects of it, but his Beneplacence presupposeth Goodness given by God to the Creature.

This Unchangeableness of God is further illustrated by his Omniscience; for from Eternity knowing all things that were to come to pass, there could no unexpected Case arise that might give occasion to him to change, and therefore this Unchangeableness is an incommunicable Perfection of God. Creatures could not act suitably to their Natures, and to their Duty, if in many of their Purposes they should not change, if Matters of moment that they expected not should occur: their Constancy reacheth no further, than that upon small and light Occasions which they might neglect or contemn, they would not change their professed Resolutions in Matters of moment.

The Unchangeableness of God importeth not that he is inexorable, and that it is in vain to pray to him, because he hath from Eternity immutably decreed all things that were to come to pass; and indeed it were a too hard Objection, if God did not determine with Foresight and Consi-

deration of the earnest Desire and fervent Supplication of his Creatures, as the Object of his Decree, and not as the meer Antecedents of it: But seeing he doth so decree, we may with as good Warrant and Confidence supplicate, as if he were undetermined when we pray; whence only there can a rational Account be given why we should pray with Divine Approbation, even in relation to the Change of insciant Nature, as against Drought, Barrenness, Inundations, &c. Are we thereby allowed to implore of God a Miracle, that by his Omnipotence he should alter the course of Nature? No, but because he hath so ordered the course of Nature, upon his foresight of the Necessity, and of the earnest Desire and Supplication of his Creatures, so that it should be correspondent to their Desire.

It doth not import a Changeableness in God, that he doth not inflict the Judgment he denounceth against Sinners, generally or particularly: And when he said to *Adam* of the forbidden Fruit, *In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die*: Or when *Isaiah* from the Lord, said to *Hezekiah*, *Set thy House in order, for thou shalt die and not live*; And yet by the same Prophet he saith, *I have heard thy Prayer, I have seen thy Tears, behold I will heal thee, and thou shalt go up to the House of the Lord on the third day, and I will add unto thy Days fifteen Years*: And when by *Jonah* he prophesied to the *Ninevites*, *Yet forty Days and Nineveh shall be overthrown*; which doubtless hath been upon a particular atrocious Sin, for which they humbled themselves with Fasting and Mourning in Sackcloth; and tho their Mourning was not Repentance unto Eternal Life, yet

yet thereupon God forgave their Overthrow which he had threatened. These and like places signify not God's Will, which is never without Effect, but the Sanction of his Justice, intimating what is deserved, or to be observed as his Pleasure.

I know some Men have considered the Intimation of *Hezekiah's* Death, and *Nineveh's* Overthrow, as Predictions; wherein not only the Unchangeableness, but the Veracity of God is concerned: And there is a whole Treatise written on that Subject, whether the Term of Life be determined and fixed, and different Judgments thereon, which I think strange, that any thing should be supposed undetermined by the eternal Decree of God, to do or permit any thing that was to come to pass, seeing it is expressly said, *Known unto God are all his Works from the beginning*. But the Addition to *Hezekiah's* Life, imports no more than God's not inflicting his threatned Judgment against *Hezekiah* for his Confidence in his own Strength, by his Armour and Treasury, which he shew to the Messengers of *Babylon*: Nor is it congruous to say, that the Prophet's Design was to show when *Hezekiah* by the course of his Nature would die; for it's evidently a threatning for his Pride and Self-confidence, which appeared more after his Recovery, but it was lurking before: For before his Sicknes it is said, that he was magnified in the sight of all Nations. There is no Example where God did ever use such Expression, but in the way of threatning for Sin: Neither do I like that Interpretation of *Jonah's* Denunciation, that there was ever a secret Exception of Repentance in the Denunciation of all Judgments, which

the *Ninevites* by the Light of Nature knew, seeing *Jonah* did not know it, but was angry that God spared *Nineveh*, lest he might be thought a false Prophet. But it is certain and frequent in Scripture, that when God denounces Evil for Sin, it is no Prediction, but a Threatning, importing no more, but that it is just to be inflicted, if there be no Redress.

MEDITATION XII.

Upon the Goodness of God.

I Do conceive that the first Divine Perfection in the natural Order arising from God's Unchangeableness, Godlikeness or Holiness in relation to Creatures, is his Goodness; for the Acts of his Goodness behoved to be before the Acts of his Justice; Mercy and Faithfulness, all which presuppose the Existence of Creatures, but the giving or designing to give them Existence: and such a Nature as God gave them, are Acts of meer Goodness which no Meritmonger can pretend to arise from any thing in the Creature; and therefore the clearest way to a distinct Apprehension of the Divine Perfections, is to follow their natural Order.

Goodness is in ordinary use of very different Significations, sometimes it comprehendeth all Perfections natural and moral: For all that is morally

rally good, or that is profitable and pleasant, are comprehended in that kind of Goodness, to which all the Acts of Reason are bounded, and it is not within the Latitude of the largest Freedom to choose any thing but what in some of these ways is, or appears to be good. But Goodness in this Latitude is not to be attributed to God, who never acteth upon meer Appearance; but all his Actings towards Creatures are morally good, even then when the Effect is naturally evil, as it is said, *There is no Evil in the City, which the Lord hath not done.*

The Goodness of God is also taken as comprehending all his Moral Perfections, by which it is said, that he is good, and doth Good, and that there is none good but one, that is God, who only is absolutely and infinitely good: but the Goodness of God here proposed is distinct from his Justice, Mercy and Truth, and is more exactly expressed by his Bountifulness or Benignity.

The Goodness of God is likewise taken as it comprehends his Faithfulness and Mercy, which are his most eminent Goodness and Benignity; but here it is understood for that Goodness of God to his Rational Creatures, which is without Consideration or Connotation of any thing in these Creatures, and is so distinguished from Faithfulness, which presupposeth Trust, or Expectation in the Creature of some Good, which is suitable to his excellent Nature to give to those that do depend, trust or wait on him for it, and yet is not as an Act of Reward in Justice. Mercy imports Compassion to a Miserable Creature, chiefly in and for Sin, and Forgiveness of the Sin, and Restitution from the Misery: But the Goodness which I

now consider, is that which is freely bestowed upon the Creature, presupposing nothing in it, of which there are exceeding many degrees, whereof some are anterior to Sin and Misery, and some are posterior, and yet are not the Acts of Mercy. For when *Adam* had fallen from his Innocency, and from the Favour of God, it was an Act of Mercy by the Mediator to pardon him, and to restore him unto the Favour of God; but it was not an Act of Mercy to raise him to an higher degree of Happiness than he had when he fell, by which he could never fall again from the Favour of God.

The first Act of God's Goodness and Bounty was in the creating of Rational Creatures, which in their Essence did necessarily imply Understanding, by which they could perceive their Creator, themselves, and other Objects, and could judg of the Attributes of these Objects, and deduce Consequences from these Judgments, and determine their own Choice of what they thought best, with a Power to act the same: all which is implied in the Essence and Being of a Rational Creature, and there can nothing be imagined more free and abstract, than God's Goodness, in giving this Existence to Rational Creatures, which were of two kinds, Angels and Men; Angels exerting all their Faculties with outward Objects, having Communication with them either immediately, or by Impressions upon them by a Medium: For unless Angels knew the Thoughts of God, Angels and Men, and the distant Actings of extrinick Objects, without intervention of a Medium, which I am far from believing (and which is an incommunicable Perfection of God, who

who can be passive in nothing, but knows all things actually in his own Decrees) I must believe that Angels communicate their Thoughts by some Signs in a Medium, and do so perceive the Thoughts and Actings of other Objects: tho it was not necessary the manner of the Knowledg of Angels should be revealed, yet I may safely remove from them what God appropriates to himself, to know Thoughts without any outward Sign; yet God communicates to Angels by a Medium, or immediately.

I do sufficiently know by Revelation that some Angels were created with far greater Perfection of Knowledg and Strength than Man; one Angel did in one Night kill fourscore and five thousand Men.

I doubt nothing that by the Goodness of God there were inbred Principles of Knowledg and Inclination in Angels, as well as in Men, by which they were innocent and holy, while they did follow them, but changeable, when so great a Multitude of them fell from their Innocency, and the Favour of God: And tho the elect Angels who persevered have the same changeable Nature, they could not be justly called happy, if God had not added a farther degree of Goodness, confirming them against all danger of falling, whence he calls them in his Word Elect Angels, which I do not think to be an Act of God's Primitive Justice, being so high a Perfection, that they could never merit it by being innocent during the time of their Trial, but that it was by the free and undeserved Goodness and Bounty of God.

The Angels by their Nature had no Power of Propagation of their Kind, but for any thing appears they were created all together, and none of
them

them depended upon another, but in so far as some might have greater Knowledg and Strength than others, and so *Beelzebub* is called the Prince of Devils, and it is like he hath been the Author of the Fall of the rest, as it is certain he was the Seducer of Man.

The Nature of Man (as the Scripture tells us) was lower than the Angels, and his Soul was incorporate with a Body fitted with Instruments apt for exerting all his Capacities by the receiving the Impression of outward Objects through the Senses, all having Communication to the Brain by the Nerves and Spirits, by which the Soul is passive, and by the same Nerves, Spirits and other Instruments are fitted to exercise Motion, and act upon outward Objects, and upon the Parts of their own Bodies. These Specialities are in the specifick Nature of Angels and Men, and therefore I reckon each of them but as Gifts of the Bounty of God.

All other Creatures were created in farther Manifestation of the Perfections of God, which is his Glory, and for the use of Angels and Men. I think it too great Partiality in those who make all the inferior Creatures to be design'd for Man's use only, and not for Angels, who have greater Pleasure in the knowledg of them, and of the Glory of the Divine Perfections shining in them, than Man; and tho Man hath more need of them, and Benefit by them, yet the Angels are not without both, in making use of them as Instruments, in Communication outwardly by them, and inwardly in them.

The free Bounty of God did imprint upon the Soul of Man the first Principles of his Knowledg

ledg of Things that fall not under Sense, without which he could never have had firm and clear Knowledg, albeit he had the Capacity to discern Implications and Consequences, downward from Causes to Effects, and upwards from Effects to Causes; for if there were not some Principles self-evident, the Chain of Consequences might run without end.

The Bounty of God did also give to Man the Capacity to know Consequences, which makes a great addition to his Perfection.

God did likewise in his Bounty give Man the distinguishing Acts of Joy and Sorrow, the one arising from Objects congruous to his Nature, and useful for him; the other from Objects unsuitable, and hurtful to him, that he might approach the one and fly from the other: So that Joy and Grief are not at Man's Discretion, but have their peculiar Objects, by the Impression whereof on the Sense, Imagination, or Memory, they are excited, and not otherwise. I know no sufficient Reason why such Sounds should be harmonious and sweet to the Ear, and others harsh, than this free Gift of God: For tho some Difference might arise from the grating of the Ear, or the easy insinuating in it, I see not how that could go the length of the Pleasure of Harmony, or Displeasure of Discord; nor can there another sufficient Reason be given of the Pleasure arising from certain Figures and Colours, and of the Displeasure from others, nor of that great variety of Smells and Tastes, or of the Pleasure that arises from the Touch, beside that Smoothness or Ruggedness, of any pungent Impression.

It is a farther degree of God's Bounty, that he gave Man so many Senses, by which he might perceive

ceive the Impression of all bodily Objects, and receive Pleasure and Profit by them, and shun Displeasure and Hurt. Food being necessary for the Subsistence of Man, God hath placed three Senses as Sentinels at different distances, warning what Food is convenient or inconvenient for him. The Eye sees ordinarily at the farthest distance, by which at the view his Appetite is moved, the very Brutes at view discern their Food and Physick more exactly than Man, because he hath the use of Reason and Experience; but many things which cannot be discerned by the Sight, being brought near the Nose will be discerned by the Smell; and what cannot be so distinguished, will be discerned by the Taste.

The Bounty of God hath yet further gratified Man, by variety of Creatures, affecting all his Senses, not only for his Necessity, but for an innumerable variety of Pleasures.

There is a several kind of Perfection by the Goodness of God given to Man, in the wonderful Structure of his Body, wherein there is such variety and multitude of Instruments serving for the use of the Soul, that there is nothing in it or of it, but what is besitted to be an Instrument of the Soul, that all the Industry of Physicians till of late, made a very small Progress, by Inference from the sensible Effects of the Body of Man, or by Anatomical Inspection; and every day there are new Discoveries made, wherein the late Invention of Microscopes helpeth much, discovering these minute Vessels, which are impossible otherwise to be seen; so that the Psalmist cries out with Admiration, *I am fearfully and wonderfully made!* No Man hath yet given any probable account

count of the Formation of the Body of Man, or other Animals, nor *how the Bones do grow in the Womb of her that is with Child.* Whence there is a great Check to Man's Presumption, who is so slow in acknowledging a Being superior to himself, and so apt to admire his own Knowledg, as if there were nothing he could not reach, when yet he knows so very little of his own Body.

The Comeliness and Beauty of Man's Body is a farther degree of the Bounty of God, which tho it be much marred, hath in some so much remaining, whence it may be considered, how great the Beauty of Man was before the Fall, and shall be yet much more after the Resurrection of the Elect; for they shall be like unto Christ's glorious Body. It were but a vain Curiosity to inquire what Alteration in Man's Body would be congruous unto that State.

The Bounty of God is signally seen in the admirable Union of the Soul and Body, which are two diverse Substances, which can and do subsist apart, and are of the most different Natures, and yet are so firmly united, that the Soul will never desert the Body, were it never so unfirm and crazy, while it can exercise its Faculties by it, and doth so love it, that it feels all things that make Impression upon it, it hath Pleasure in all that befits the Body to be its Instrument, and Grief or Pain on the perception of all that is hurtful to the Body: Yea it apprehends not only that the Grief and Pain, but that the Hurt that causeth it is subjected in the Soul it self, the Excess and Abuse of which makes Men reflecting upon themselves to apprehend themselves much more as a Body, than as a Spirit; as if the Soul were subordinate to the
Body,

Rody, and its chief Use were only to enliven and preserve it: And therefore in the sharp Pains, confounding Terrors, or excessive Joys, arising from Sense or Imagination, the Soul can hardly admit of another Thought, by still reflecting upon these; and therefore sensible Pleasures do divert and seduce the Soul from Objects and Delights which are more spiritual, and suitable to it self, more noble and sublime, the increase or continuance whereof will never breed loathing or lessening of their Pleasure thence arising, as sensible Pleasures do: yet this is not to be imputed to, nor doth it blemish the Goodness of God, in giving sensible Pleasures, which cherish and besit the Mind when rightly used. The Stoical Severity doth not a little reflect upon the Wisdom and Goodness of God.

There is no small Debate among the Learned about the Cause of the Union of the Soul and Body, which I am not now to prosecute; but I cannot so well satisfy my self, as by apprehending that this Union is by an Instinct freely given of God to the Soul, by which it doth so cleave to the Body, and delight in it, that it can never leave it while it is able to serve it, which is not in the Essence of the Soul, tho it be comprehended in the Essence of Man, implying more than a Soul and an organized Body, by which it can receive Impressions, and act accordingly, which an Angelical Spirit can do; and Experience hath shown that they oft-times have done, acting by a fresh and incorrupted Body, whence the Soul was departed, that it was not discernable from a Man. Yea evil Spirits have frequently possessed living Bodies, and have overacted the Soul contrary to its Inclina-

clinations and Attempts, as being a stronger Spirit. When I consider the Strength of Self-love, that is another inavoidable Instinct, or even the fresh and tender Affection of Parents to their Children, having nothing in them to breed Aversion, which no reasoning can overpower; I have no Hesitation that the Soul is capable of this Instinct, and that it ceaseth not to have a desire to be reunited to the Body, even in its glorious State of Separation; else the Resurrection should not be a farther Perfection of Glory. Neither do I like the excessive Expressions of the Soul's being in the Body as in a Prison; for tho the Soul be more happy when out of the Body, when it is in a sinful State, because a great part of Mens Sins arise from their bodily Affections, whereof Angelical Spirits are not capable, yet that is from Man's Corruption through Sin, and doth nothing derogate the Goodness of God: I do not believe that these Spirits acting a Body have Pleasure or Pain, as Souls have, by the Impressions or Actings through that Body. If it were not for this inavoidable Instinct, would not the Soul prevent the Pains of Torture and Death? Oft-times with Ignominy and Cruelty, to prevent which, many, not the meanest and ignoblest of Men, have wilfully made their Bodies incapable to serve their Souls, that they might escape it; and how many more would, if without that Pain they could flee out of their Bodies? few would suffer Misery in them, but those who knew and did acknowledg the Trust and Command to preserve them given by God, under an higher Pain than they could suffer by abiding in them.

A farther degree of the Goodness of God, is manifested in the other inbred Inclinations, which
God

God hath freely given to the Soul, beside that of cleaving to the Body, which is not by fatal Necessity, seeing the Soul is a separable Substance, and might easily escape from the Body if it could please so to do. Such Principles are the Love to God above all, as being the Sovereign Good, and incomparably most amiable Object; the Love to Mankind, preferring the Interest of Mankind to the Interest of any part of Men, and in most things to Self-interest. Self-love also is a Gift of God, and good in it self when kept within its Bounds, tho by the Corruption of Sin, it is become the Cause of most Evils: Men do either wholly exclude the Love of God and of Mankind, or do exceedingly abate them, and subordinate them to Self-love: For these Affections cannot arise before or without the Perception of their proper Objects. Therefore it is (that because it is long before the Perception of the Deity or of the common Interest arise in the Soul, during which time Self-love doth wholly and solely possess the Soul, and all its Affections are exercised without Restraint, except what ariseth by the Fear of Chastisement, or the natural or industrious Perception of the Uncomeliness of some extravagant Acts) that Self-love becomes habitual, and so strong, that when the Perception of God, or the common Interest of Mankind, by the natural Conscience or Instruction is excited, Self-love makes the Soul have a powerful Aversion from these Objects, which would low or restrain it; so that it can never be kept within Bounds, especially in Subordination to God, without supernatural Grace given by him: It will sooner yield to the Love of a Family, of a Society, of a Country, than
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to the Love of the common Interest of Mankind ; yet even Heathens have come a great length as to that, but came never to any futable Proportion of the Love to God, as all their Writings and Actings do manifestly show.

There is another general inbred Principle and Inclination in Man, to do that which is congruous to and becoming his Nature, not only to what is essential to him, but to what is superadded by the Divine Benignity, which is more sensibly felt in the Aversion of things which are unbecoming Man, and which all judg to be vicious and vile, except in so far as they have eradicated their inbred Principles, and debauched their Natural Inclinations: so even natural Men love Temperance, Sobriety, Modesty, Meekness, Sincerity, Constancy, Courage and Comeliness; and those whose Depravation make them love and practise the contrary in themselves, do frequently hate them in others, and never cherish them but when it is to lessen or abolish their own Shame, by making their Vice more common, or that they require the Concourse of others to practise them.

Beside these general Principles which require Attention and Ratiocination, God by his Bounty hath imprinted on the Soul of Man special Principles for eminent Cases, which operate like Instincts without necessity of reasoning, as the desire of Happiness, the care to preserve Life, the abhorrence of Cruelty, the desire to relieve the Innocent oppressed, Gratitude to Benefactors, Faithfulness to those that do rationally rely and trust, Love to those in Society and Friendship, that especially which is most entire and absolute by Marriage, and the mutual natural Affection of Pa-

rents and Children, and of those which are of one Kindred and Blood.

The Institution of Marriage was a farther degree of the Bounty of God, appointed in Innocency, that betwixt one Man and one Woman, by the free Choice of both, there should be so intimate a Society and Friendship, as could be no greater, having all their Interests common, perpetual, and most part incommunicable; that each of them had more Right to, and Enjoyment of all, than when they had them alone, excluding the other: tho the unfutable Choice of some hath marred this Blessing, it diminisheth not the Bounty of God, being by the fault of the Parties, at least is a Judgment for their other Faults, and it was their Interest that this Society was indissoluble even by the Consent of both, but only by Adultery or Desertion, which gave a strong Inducement to compose their Humours, tho naturally discrepant, rather than to be in a continual Disquiet. It was a great Addition to the Happiness of this Conjugal Estate, that there was given them so strong an Inclination of these Imbraces necessary for Posterity, which otherwise have nothing of Comeliness in them; and Women would never have endured the Trouble and Pain of Child-bearing, if this Affection, and the natural desire of having Children did not over-master them. How great Addition to *Adam's* Pleasure behoved it to be, when awakening from his Sleep God presented him *Eve*, the only Creature like to himself, which was the first Glass in which he did behold the Beauty of his own Body as well as hers, who was fitted for him in all things that he could desire, not only passionately loved, but even more
passio-

passionately loving; both being endued with the same Principles and Inclinations, and requiring no need of farther Acquaintance than the first View; both being innocent and void of all Vice, and able to communicate their Thoughts by that Language with which God did endue them without their own Industry, by which they might communicate their Knowledge of God, their Admiration, Confidence and Delight in him, their Love and Reverence to him, and Obsequiousness to his Pleasure in all things, which they knew by the Moral Law written in their Hearts, and which (it is like) he did explain and declare unto them, as he did his positive Command of the forbidden Fruit to be a Test of their Obedience, by restraining their Appetite from so pleasant a Fruit; for which Restraint they had no inbred Inclination, as they had to the Moral Duties, but rather contrary, except his Pleasure and Prohibition: for if he had willed that they should not eat of it, it would certainly have been effectual; but he did only declare what they might eat, and what they might not eat, and denounced the Punishment if they did eat what was forbidden; which sufficiently shews, that their forbearing would have been acceptable to him, which was sufficient to lay the strongest Obligation upon them, and yet he expressed the heaviest Penalty if they transgressed, which was implied by their knowledge of his Justice, tho it had not been expressed; which could not consist with his moving, exciting, or necessitating them to it. *Adam* whose Knowledge was so great, would not have omitted to plead, that when he pleaded so weak a ground as the Invitation of his Wife, not that he spared the Sovereignty of God;

for he insinuates a too harsh Reflection against God, not only blaming the Woman, but that she was given of God.

It was a farther degree of the Bounty of God, that he had given a mutual Affection between Angels and Men, that their Converse was both profitable and pleasant.

By these Principles that God gave Man, he was not only innocent without Vice or Sin, but he was holy, and morally good, till he fell from his Integrity, by disobeying God, and brought Sin into the World: if he then being innocent became sinful, tho he was ripe in his Capacities so soon as he was created, and had the Love of God awakned in him, in so high a degree, having freshly received so great and so high Favours of God, how much more capable behoved his Posterity to be of Defection that were to be born, and live so long an animal Life, unless God had given him a Promise, or declared unto him a Purpose to confirm him and his Posterity, if he had continued to give Proof of his Obedience in his innocent fallible State, as it is commonly believed that the elect Angels were confirmed?

The Bounty of God doth yet further manifest it self, in giving Man the Dominion of all the Creatures in this inferior World, not peculiarly to Adam, as if all Right of the Creatures had been to be derived from him; but God gave Right to subdue and possess them, which could not be done by Adam, but by Mankind; and therefore the first Title of Right was the Possession of that which was void and possessed by none, and the Fruits thereof, not only the Profit but the Pleasure of the Creatures, was given chiefly to Man. The variety

variety of Shapes and Colours of Animals, Trees, Herbs, and Fruits, the beautiful Verdure of Trees and Herbs, the various Painture of the Fruits of Trees, of the Flowers and Blossoms of Plants, and of the Feathers of Birds, were of little use to themselves, but of much use to Man, by an innocent Pleasure arising from the Sight of them, leading to the Admiration of the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God their Author. In which I doubt not that the Angels are Sharers, so that it was not in vain that the Earth brought forth all these things, tho for a long time Man possessed but a small part of it; for the Wisdom of God could have so ordered, that the Seeds disseminate in Earth and Waters should only spring as Man had use of them. It does not diminish the Bounty of God, that there is a great Inequality in the Perfections of these Creatures, and that some of them bred Horror and Hurt unto Man, because they set off the Lustre of the rest, which otherwise would be less valued; if we never had Darkness, we would little value Light. The hurtful Creatures are Instruments of God's Justice, and none of them want their peculiar Vertues.

It is also the Goodness of God, that the Discovery of the Natures of the Creatures, and all experimental Knowledg hath proceeded from the beginning, and shall to the end encrease, that there might never be wanting a suitable Exercise, Diversion and Delight, to the more ingenious and inquiring Men.

The Sun, the Moon and Stars, and all their Courses and Motions, are designed to manifest to Angels, but chiefly to Men, the Majesty and

Glory of the Omnipotent Creator, and for the Pleasure and Profit of Men.

It is a general Effect of the Bounty of God, that he preserveth all these things in their Existence, Power, Vigor and Action; but more particularly he preserves Man and Beast, in overruling their Inclinations, whereby they shun those things that might destroy them, and attain those that may preserve them. Without God's Preservation no Creature could subsist, nor have any Activity; *For in him we live, and move, and have our Being.* God needs no positive Act to destroy any Creature; if he withdraw his Support, they would return into nothing, out of which they came; Yet I do not think, that Preservation is a continual Creation; otherwise God should create the Souls of the wicked full of actual Wickedness, and even the damned Spirits in all their Malice; I know not how this Difficulty could be shunned by any, but those who think that Accidents can subsist being separate from Subjects, or transmitted from one Subject to another: Nor could the same Individual be continued, but as every moment one is created, another behoved to be annihilated; so that all Creatures were deceived of themselves and all others, thinking they were the same, and yet they were an innumerable Multitude of in-coexisting Individuals. Preservation is more properly expressed by a continued Support; as Creation is an Elevation to Existence from nothing, Preservation is the Support from receding into nothing; a thing supported will certainly fall if the Support be removed.

The Bounty of God is crowned by God's Government of the World, especially of Angels and Men:

Men: How unhappy should Man be if they had an Epicurean God, that were not concerned in the Actings of Men, leaving them wholly to themselves?

The Goodness of God extends it self, not only to the Natural Capacities of Men, but to supernatural Powers, as the Gift of Prophecy, of Language not learned, and the Interpretation thereof, and of other miraculous Works, which, in distinction from saving Graces, are called Gifts: These are the Graces whereby God gives the supernatural Faculties of the Regenerate in Conversion, or doth encrease the same thereafter; yet that Term is otherwise taken, and is extended to a graceful Countenance or Deportment, making the Person having it, to have a special kind of Amiability: for it is not every Beauty or Comeliness that is esteemed Gracefulness, but that which shews a Nobleness or Excellency of Mind, which therefore is very suitable to Princes, and is frequently attributed to them without sufficient Ground. The highest degree of this Gracefulness is called Majesty, appropriated to Kings; yea every signal Favour having eminent Effects, is called Grace: whence ariseth the distinction of *Gratia gratis data*, and *Gratia gratum faciens*; upon both accounts the Capacities given in Conversion are called Graces, being freely given, of the greatest Import, and making the Receivers acceptable and lovely to God; and it is chiefly in respect of these that he takes the Title of Most Gracious God, and thereby also the Converted are called Gracious.

MEDITATION XIII.

Upon the Truth of God.

NExt unto the Goodness of God is his Truth. Nothing can be more evident, than that it is most congruous to, and becoming the Divine Nature to be true; nor could any thing more inconsistent be imagined, than lying or deceiving in God. The Truth of God is the first Ground-stone of his Creatures Happiness, and if it were not sure, it were impossible to know that they were not in all things deluded, even in the concurring Testimonies of Sense and Reason. No Man could know there were any real thing existent beside himself, nor what or whence himself were. Atheists are come to that height of Impudence, as to pretend that they are the Wits of the World, who will believe nothing but what is certain and evident, and will not believe that there is a God, because they see it not evident, in which they are evidently the grossest Ignorants as well as the most imprudent Fools. Ignorant they are, because they found all their Interest upon an inconsistent Lie, supposing certainty of Knowledge from themselves, when yet they find themselves often deceived; yea supposing themselves undeceiveable, whereas it is impossible to attain to any certain Rule of Man's Life, without supposing a Deity, abounding in Truth, and which cannot lie or deceive: How could

could any be sure of any outward Impression of Sense? for the same Impression may be in the Sense or Brain, not from an extrinick, but from an intrinick Cause. Those whose Eyes are vitiated with any unnatural Tincture, think they see all Objects painted with certain Colours, but falsely: Yea the Hypochondriack think they see not only false Colours, but even Bodies and Shapes without any extrinick Impression. What strange Sounds doth the disordered Ear represent? Taste and Smell may not only be depraved, but deprived; how then could Certainty be inferred from Sense, if it were not presupposed, that the Author of Sense were true, and would not deceive, and therefore hath given his reasonable Creatures Understanding distinct from Sense, which can reflect upon its own Apprehensions, and perceive the Condition of the Organs and Medium of Sense, and make use of the concurring Testimonies of other Senses, and the natural self-evident Principles in the Mind, and thereby rest in perfect assurance? which must explicitly or implicitly rest upon this ground, that God the Author of these Faculties is true, and cannot deceive, and therefore the Creature may securely rest in the Concurrence of them. This is yet more evident in the inbred first Principles of Knowledg, contemplative or practical: How could any certainly believe that these were true, if he did not believe the Truth of God that gave them? The concurring Testimony of Men through the World could not suffice; for that Testimony is known by Sense, by Word or Writing: yea, tho one Man could travel through the whole World, and speak with all the Persons in it, that were yet by Sense, which
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needs those inbred Principles of Reason to secure it against Error, there could no more be firmly concluded, than that these Notions being common among People that keep no Intercourse, they cannot be from Men, but from a superior Cause, which yet would not conclude if that Cause were not infallible, which could neither be deceived nor deceive.

As the Truth of God is a necessary Foundation of the Certainty of natural Knowledg, it must be no less necessary for the Certainty of revealed Knowledg: For if God could lie or deceive, how were it possible to know the truth of Revelations, and distinguish them from the Illusions of Devils or Men? not from Miracles, which might be from God's Omnipotence, and could not conclude without his Veracity; not from the Assertion of the greatest Apostle, and most glorious Angel: For *Paul saith, If we, or an Angel from Heaven shall preach another Gospel to you, let him be accursed*: which necessarily implies, that if a contrary Doctrine were preach'd from God, it behoved to overturn his Veracity; for otherwise the posterior Testimony of *Paul*, or of an Angel, would be derogatory and preferable to the prior. It were not possible to know that God were Holy, Benign, Just, Merciful, Faithful, Wise and Sovereign, if he were not absolutely true; for it is clear that these could not be believed, because God said it, if he were not unchangeably true: nor could any part of his Holiness or Godlikeness be believed without believing that he is true, there being nothing more suitable to the Deity than Truth, which being surely believed, all his other Perfections must be believed, because God that cannot lie, hath declared them by Reason and Revelation.

I am not moved with that Objection against the Apostle's Assertion, that God altered the Constitution and Order of the Jewish Church, and why might he not then without inroaching upon his Veracity alter the Christian Church? The Reason is clear, because in the Christian Religion it is a chief part, that there is no Name given under Heaven by which Salvation can come, but by the Name of Jesus, and that there is never another way to be accepted or expected, tho by the Annunciation of an Angel from Heaven; this was never said of the Jewish Oeconomy.

The Truth of God being so fundamentally necessary to be believed, God in his Wisdom and Goodness hath given the strongest Evidences of it. There can be nothing more contrary to the Principles of natural Light, than to imagine a lying or deceiving God. There is nothing so powerfully and peremptorily asserted in the Scripture as the Truth of God, who is called the God of Truth, and Christ calleth himself the Truth in *abstracto*. In the Character and Description God gives of himself to *Moses*, he declareth himself *merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in Goodness and Truth; and he is a God full of Compassion, and gracious, long-suffering and plenteous in Mercy and Truth; his Mercy is everlasting, and his Truth endureth to all Generations*. Seldom is the Truth of God mentioned but with his Mercy; for Mercy could be of no moment if God's Truth were not absolutely sure: *By Mercy and Truth Iniquity is purged, saith Solomon; and Mercy and Truth preserve the King*. God's Word is frequently called the Word of Truth.

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But that which is most signal to convince us of the Truth of God, is that he declareth, *it is impossible for God to lie.*

Truth doth import, 1. The Conformity between the Signs instituted to express Thoughts, and the Thoughts whether these Signs be by Word or Writ, or by other Signs, as beckning with the Hand or the Head, or the raising a pleasant Aspect in the Countenance to signify Assent, Approbation, or Acceptance, which is more properly called Sincerity, and Truth by such Signs is called Veracity. Truth doth also extend to the Conformity between the Thoughts and the Objects thereof, and so Truth is said to be in the Heart; and to the Conformity of Words spoken or written, or other Signs unto things signified, tho not conform to the Thoughts or Judgment of him that expresseth them; so there may be Veracity without Verity, when Words are conform to the Judgment of him that speaketh, but not to the thing signified, yet both may concur with design to seduce, or lead into Error, or evil Practice, when the Premises are expressed, and the Conclusion is left to the Hearer, whose Principles or Opinions are known, that thence they would infer a wrong and inconsequent Conclusion; which when done with design to seduce is no less Deceit, than when a consequent Conclusion is inferred from false Grounds: But it is no deceit to express Truth for good Ends, tho the Speaker may know that the Hearers will make bad use of it, unless the Speaker be obliged not to suffer the Hearer to make that use. Deception also may be without Words or Signs signifying Thoughts, as when a tempting Object is brought unto the Sense, Mind or Memory, with design to tempt or seduce.

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In all these ways God is perfectly true, he never expresseth Words or Signs but such as are both conform to his Thoughts, and the thing signified; he never designs to deceive by any Words or Signs, nor doth he tempt by these or any other Objects represented: for God can neither tempt, nor be tempted to Evil; he may represent Objects to prove the Firmness and Faithfulness of his Creatures, but with the Temptation he giveth always Strength, either effectual, or at least sufficient to escape: He made the forbidden Fruit very pleasant to the Eye, and it is like to the Smell also, which being appointed a Badg of Man's Obedience to God's Will alone, it could not reach the End, if it were altogether indifferent; but it was just and fit that it should have a contrary Excitation in the Sense, which might be over-ruled by a more powerful Inclination of the Mind, but requiring Attention and Diligence to keep that Principle of the Mind in remembrance, thereby to over-rule the Incitation of the Sense. Therefore it may warrantably be thought, that the forbidden Fruit was more pleasant than any other in the Garden; for it was an unsutable sign of Affection and Obedience unto God, if God had forbidden the eating of the Fruit upon the one side of the Tree, and allowed the eating of it on the other. Circumcision and the most of the Jewish Rites were of the like nature, and had all a great Contrariety to the Pleasure of Sense: Yea, tho God permitted Satan to tempt to the eating of the Fruit, not only from the Pleasure of Sense, but from a false Expectation of greater Wisdom, there was a Principle in the Mind fully sufficient to resist both, that God could not be envious, and that
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there could be no Advantage to transgress his Command; and therefore tho God foreknew the Event, he was not accessary to the Transgression, nor put any necessity upon the Man or Woman to commit it, and therefore did justly and severely punish them both; nor did they even by their after-thoughts plead, that the Temptation was insuperable, and that they had not sufficiency of Strength to resist it, tho they omitted not very insufficient Excuses.

There is no ground to stumble at the Prophet Jeremiah's Saying, *Thou hast deceived me, and I was deceived*; nor the words of the same Prophet saying, *Al! Lord God! surely thou hast greatly deceived this People, and Jerusalem, saying, Ye shall have Peace, whereas the Sword reached unto the Soul*; which are no more than the weak Rovings of Saints in the Extasy of Trouble. Such as were many of Job's Expressions, and David's saying, *That in vain had he washed his Hands in Innocence, when he saw the Prosperity of the wicked*. It is evident, that God never said to Jerusalem, *Ye shall have Peace*, simply, but if ye follow the Paths of Peace; and so there was no Inconsistency with the Event, that the Sword reached unto the Soul, seeing they followed not the ways of Peace. Neither doth the Parabolical Representation of Micah the Prophet, *That the Lord said, Who shall entice Ahab, that he may go up and fall at Ramoth Gilead?* And when a Spirit said, *He would go out and be a lying Spirit in the Mouth of Ahab's Prophets*; and the Lord said, *thou shalt entice him, and thou shalt also prevail*: Now therefore behold the Lord hath put a lying Spirit in the Mouth of Ahab's Prophets. These and the like Expressions, such as God's hardening Mens Hearts, must be understood

derstood according to the Analogy of Faith, in Consistency with the infinite Perfections of God; and they are elsewhere explicated in Scripture, *that the wicked harden their own Hearts, and that God giveth Men up (who have refused the Offer and Means of Grace) to follow their own Ways, and unto strong Delusions, to believe Lies, because they received not the Truth in Love: and therefore they can be attributed no other way to God, than that they cannot be without his Permission, and his permissive Will and Decree, and his over-ruling Providence, bringing Good out of Evil.*

Some very learned have held Truth not to be distinct from Goodness or Bounty, but a Branch of it; and where that is not to be used, Lies may be used, as well as Stratagems against Enemies: If this were true, it were not impossible for God to lie, but Truth is a Perfection wholly distinct from Bounty and from Justice, and is rather a Point of Decency. How unbecoming were it and incongruous to the infinitely blessed and glorious God to express a Lie? For Creatures may be blameless in expressing Words not conformed to the thing signified, which is not a Lie, because not disconform to their own Judgment; but the Omniscient God can never use Expressions disconform to the things signified, but they must also be disconform to his own Thoughts.

I know there are too many, who to uphold their Philosophick Notions, do suppose that God in the Scripture speaketh many things according to the vulgar Errors of Men, and not according to the Truth of the things signified; which is a gross Error, derogatory to the Truth of God, and to be abhorred, tho there were no other

other evil Consequence, but there be many: For instance, a way is thence opened to innumerable Errors, which when redargued by Expressions in Scripture, though they be proper and plain, yet there is still an Evasion, that these are but spoken according to the vulgar Error and Prepossession of Men; which in some things they think evident, and take the Authority to extend to the like, so far as they please, neither is there any Evidence or Rule in Scripture where to stop. God useth figurative and parabolical Speeches, but never any Falshood is spoken by the Motion of his Spirit. I admired and abhorred to see a Professor of Divinity in a Treatise heap up so many places of Scripture, and of so great moment, as spoken by erroneous Prepossession of Men, but not true and conform to the things signified, which yet may easily be answered. God speaketh often to Man's Capacity as to the Manner, but never untrue the Matter. Kings and States may infer Good from the false Prepossessions of People, which they presuppose, but do not assent to, or approve, at least should not, tho they may suppress their Disapprobation: Who should then imagine that God would approve false Opinions, to infer true, unless they were related, not as his Opinions, but expressed as theirs?

It may be doubted, whether God's Truth be wholly his Moral Perfection, or if partly Natural, which I do not inquire out of Curiosity, but thereby to know what is the Moral Duty of Men as to Truth, which is a part of God's Image, and to be regulated according to the Divine Pattern. The Conformity of God's Thoughts to things extrin-sick, is rather to be understood a Conformity of
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these things to God's Thoughts, than of his Thoughts to these things, as the Impression is conform to the Seal, not the Seal to the Impression. A Conformity to any thing imports a Priority and Preference of that to which the other is conform, yet there is a likeness betwixt both; and therefore the Truth of God's Thoughts is better expressed by a Conformity with things, than to things: Yet God's Thoughts are conform to his Natural Perfections, which in the Order of Nature are prior to his Thoughts of them; but his voluntary or moral Perfections are in the Order of Nature posterior to his Thoughts, for he chooses them because he knows them to be congruous to his Natural Perfections, as being comprehended in his Godlikeness or Holiness. The Truth of God's Thoughts is incommunicable to Creatures, whose Thoughts are only true, because conform to the things thought of. Therefore the Truth of God's Thoughts as to the things signified, is Natural, not a Moral Perfection, more than is his Knowledge or his Will.

Whence I conceive the Conformity of Creatures Thoughts to Things is a Natural not a Moral Perfection, and therefore Errors in them are not simply by that Disconformity Sins: For I know no ground to believe that the Angels are not capable of Mistakes of Things not necessary to be known or believed; but erroneous Thoughts are only sinful by a supervening Command, to have such Thoughts as are necessary for Holiness; and so Mens Thoughts contrary to the Divine Perfections, and contrary to the Dependence and Duty of Creatures, are not only false, but injurious.

Inadvertance or Mistake in this Point, hath bred many sharp Debates and Divisions among the more Judicious, and much Disquiet to the Godly of lesser Capacity, apprehending every Error in their Judgment to be a Sin, wherein they have stumbled much upon the frequent Expressions in Scripture containing so high Elogies of the Truth, for which weare bidden to contend, not adverting that by the Truth is not meant every Truth, but the Truth *καὶ ἐξομν*, or by way of Excellency, the Truth, which makes us free, which surely is not every Truth, but the Truths requisite for Holiness and Happiness. I am perswaded there are no Errors so pernicious as those which give an unamiable Aspect of God, and his Divine Perfections, hindering or abating the Admiration, Delight and Trust in him, and Obsequiousness to his Pleasure.

The Truth of God is oft-times attributed to the Performances of his Promises, as it is also unto the Promises of Creatures; but the Obligation to Performance doth not depend upon the Truth of the Promise, but from Justice arising from the Promise made, which obligeth; tho there were not a Purpose to perform, yet there is a Truth in Promises when they are conform to the Thoughts, and Purpose to do, as they say who make them.

I adore and bless thee, O God of Truth! whose Expressions can never be disconform to thy Thoughts, or to the things expressed; who never canst delude or deceive thy Rational Creatures, not by any fatal Necessity, but because with unalterable Certainty, as sure as the strongest Necessity, thou wilt ever be true and sincere; and there-

fore I may safely and securely rest upon all that thou hast proposed, purposed, or promised; for Heaven and Earth may pass away, but one lot of thy blessed Will shall never pass unfulfilled.

I know there have been great Thoughts of Heart upon God's general Commands, Persuasions, and Expostulations to Faith and Holiness, how these could be sincere, when God knew that they would not be effectual; and that it was not in the Creatures Power to make them effectual: which is not proper to be cleared here, but will be clear by the right understanding of the Oeconomy of God's Dispensations towards Men. I shall only now say, that a Physician may sincerely intreat and exhort with a Patient to admit of a Cure for a Wound otherwise incurable, which he wilfully refuses to admit, tho he knew that the Patient himself is not able to cure himself, and that no other Physician can come in time to do it: Nor do I think that ever God did send his Gospel to a People, where he knew that all would be absolute Rejecters of it, or of the Offers made in it.

MEDITATION XIV.

Upon the Justice of God.

BEside that Goodness of God, which is absolute and boundless, presupposing nothing in Creatures, as the Consideration or special Occasion of it,

it, I perceive there is a Goodness of God which hath a special occasion in his Creatures, and keeps an exact Proportion with the Actings of Rational Creatures; which is the Goodness of Remuneration or Reward, which is essentially different from the former, and is remunerative Justice, which cannot be distinctly understood alone without considering the punitive Justice of God; and therefore I apply my Thoughts to the Justice of God, which in the natural Order falls nearest to his Goodness and Truth: For Mercy presupposeth Misery incurr'd by Justice, and Faithfulness is the ultimate Attribute relative to Rational Creatures: Wisdom and Dominion reach all Creatures. Nothing is more necessary to Rational Creatures than the distinct Knowledge of God's Justice, which is the Pattern of their own Justice, and is necessary to have right Affections towards God. I may doubt or be ignorant of some Acts of the Divine Dispensations that have natural Evil in them, whether they be Acts of Goodness or not, or whether Acts of Sovereignty or not, without Blame; but I am sure they cannot be without Justice. I doubt not but the damned Spirits are convinced of God's Justice in their own Damnation; their Temptation was not about the Justice, but the Goodness of God; they were not content with, nor abode in the Station wherein God placed them: Satan did on the same ground tempt *Adam*, as if God envied Man's Good, by hindering him to eat that Fruit that would make him wise like God. I know not whether the inbred Principle of God's Mercy was in Man before the Fall, but I doubt nothing that it was in all Mankind after. There is a greater Indifferency in God, in giving Mercy,
than

than in doing Justice; *He hath Mercy on whom he will have Mercy*: he never said so of Justice, he hath acknowledged himself Debtor, and obliged by Justice. Mercy is of the most eminent Bounty, which not only punisheth not where Punishment is deserved, but provides a Mediator to satisfy Justice.

Justice is diversly understood, sometimes for all the Acts of Godliness and Morality, even for some Acts indifferent; as when any exact that which is due to them, they are said to do justly, tho more properly that they do not unjustly, for they are not always obliged to exact what is due, they may forbear it, they may forgive it. That Justice which comprehends Godliness and Morality, is therefore called universal Justice; but the Justice here proposed is not of that Extent, but is called particular or special Justice.

I know the Justice of God by the Light of Nature, from an inbred Principle of the natural Conscience, shewing me that I ought to be just: Justice is implied in the Conception of a Deity. It would be an evident Inconsistency to apprehend an unjust God. I may fortify my Perswasion of God's Justice, because he hath given me a natural Evidence that I ought to be just, and therefore it must be pleasing to him, therefore it must be in himself; but I do not think that the Knowledge of the Justice of God, or God's other positive Perfections, are to be inferred from the infinite Extension of ours; for Truth is precise, and hath no degrees: Justice implies Proportion, and it cannot be said that God's Rewards are infinite in the way of Justice; and his vindictive Justice is only infinite in time, by Accident, because the

Creature is never able to expiate the infinite Aversion God hath against Sin ; yet the Mediator did expiate it in a short Life, by the Value more than by the Weight of his Sufferings ; for Weight can no more be infinite than Bulk. Tho all the Damned be eternally punished, yet not equally, because there is not equal Strength to bear, and more atrocious Guilt to punish ; *It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah, than for Capernaum.* Nothing is more evident to Man than Justice, that is of so universal use to Man : His earliest rational Thoughts are not to do Wrong, or to hurt any innocent Rational Creature ; the opposite of which he accounteth Right, and Justice is called Righteousness. The first Apprehension of God is, that there is an universal Terror in the Mind of Man upon account of evil Resolutions, or evil Deeds, tho it were impossible for any Creature to know them ; so that it is not from the Fear of Man, nor is it a groundless childish Terror, for the wiser that Men grow, it doth the more increase ; from whence there is an inevitable and immediate Consequence, that there is some Power superior to Man, that can and will punish wicked Deeds and Purposes. Man could not live in the World, or converse with Man, if he had not the natural knowledg of Justice ; he could neither know what he ought to give, nor what he ought to crave, what he should encourage, nor what he should discourage. But I bless God, that to the Twilight of Nature he hath given to his Church the Meridian Light of Revelation. The Bias of Self-love would easily pervert the natural Principle of Justice, if God did not hem it in, and set its Bounds by Revelation, yet habitual Perverseness breaks over all.

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There are three kinds of Justice, *Attributive, Distributive and Contributive, or Judicial.* *Attributive Justice* is the giving to every rational Being that which is their own, by allowing them to enjoy whatsoever they have that is their own, by giving them that which is their own, but is not enjoyed and possessed by them; under which are comprehended all Obligations to do or perform, whether by Paction or Promise, or by Law of a superior Power. So Justice requires that we should deliver to the Owner that which is his own, and in our Power, tho we neither had it from him nor had promised so to do; much more ought we to restore that which we had from him, the same Individual if we can, at least the equivalent, whether it were by Injury we took it from him, or otherwise. This kind of Justice is commonly called *Commutative Justice*, because it is chiefly exercised in exchanging of Deeds and Things; but the Term is too narrow to express the Thing, therefore it is better called *Attributive Justice*, a chief Branch whereof is the allowing others to enjoy their own without Molestation; which is properly expressed by Innocence, that is, doing them no Hurt, neither in this nor in the performance of Promises, when there is no other Cause; or even in restoring the Goods of others, is there any thing of Commutation. The second kind of Justice is called *Distributive*, consisting in the Distribution of Rewards or Punishments, proportioned to deserving Good or Evil; here it cannot be said that there is given to any that which is their own, but that which they merit or deserve; this consists with *Attributive Justice*, but is not performed by it. He that injures by taking away, or troubling a Man in

the Enjoyment of his own, is not thereby freed by Restitution, or Reparation, but he deserveth also Punishment: Restitution or Reparation is the only Interest of the Injured; but Punishment is only by God, immediately, or by his Warrant and Command; *Vengeance is mine, and I will repay, saith the Lord.* Distributive Justice is in some way the Duty of all Men, tho they be not invested with any Judicial Authority, as Fathers of Families, or Rulers of Civil Societies: there is a Debt in it, but not always to the Party on whom it is exercised, tho oft-times it be so; a Reward may be claimed in Justice by the Person meriting, a Punishment may also be claimed. We may warrantably pray that God would not cease to be a Corrector, as well as an Instructor, and that he would not give us up to our selves: Children may desire the like of Parents, Servants of Masters, People of Rulers, tho the particular manner and the measure be frequently shunned by Self-love: Nor are Men to demand Justice against themselves, as to Life and Fame, which they are obliged to preserve, and not to reveal against them that which God hath left secret; but there is always a Debt to God in Distributive Justice, for Men are not so obliged in Acts of Benignity, as in Acts of Justice: Liberality in giving or forgiving that which is not due to the Party, is not so obliging even as to God, as his Justice.

The third kind of Justice is Judicial, that is only to be performed by those who have not only Power to judg, but do proceed in the way of Judgment, whereby it is distinguished from Distributive Justice strictly taken: Judges do distribute Punishments according to Merit, and Rewards also,

also, as they are able, according to the Merit of the Parties; and in most Cases of Distributive Justice, private Persons are relieved, and are liable to no Debt even to God, in so far as he hath devolved the sole Power upon Civil Judges: Before these were constituted, every Man was obliged to reward and punish as he had Ability and Opportunity. The Command of God immediately after the Deluge, *Whosoever sheds Man's Blood, by Man shall his Blood be shed*, is not a Prediction, for then it had not been true, but is a Precept, not directed to Civil Judges, for then there were none, nor to Fathers, tho they were; but Man is as large in the one part of the Precept as in the other: It is not said, whosoever sheds Man's Blood, by that Man or his Relation his Blood shall be shed; for he that's killed or disabled cannot shed his Blood who did it; nor ought he to be Judg or Avenger of it, where another can be had, which is the Prerogative of God alone. Men may defend themselves against Injury, which is not by Distributive or Judicial Justice, but by the Obligation they owe to God to preserve these Lives whereof he alone is Master; but they may not avenge themselves without a Judg, knowing the Evidence of the Fact, tho he be not a Civil Judg, having an Authoritative Superiority. Kings and States ought not to be both Judges and Parties where others can be had; but before they enter in War, they ought to demand Satisfaction, and give sufficient Evidence of the Fact, and not decline Arbitriment, where an indifferent Judg can be found; nor do they judg their own Cause against their Subjects, but by Judges, tho constituted by themselves, yet sworn to do Justice between them
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and their Subjects without respect of Parties, not only in their Civil Rights, but in Crimes and Injuries against themselves. It is by this kind of Justice that Princes and States interpose between their Neighbours entering in War, where no Arbitration hath preceded, and they cannot justly concur with the injured without a preceding Judgment; for it would choak Humanity, to think that they might kill Men by implicit Faith or Report, much less by Kindness or Contract. By this Justice Men are not only obliged to act as Judges, but as Witnesses, by giving their own Testimonies, or any Evidence they have, or can cause any in their Power to give: *Avenge not your selves* is not with a Restriction to private Persons; *Vengeance is God's*, and can only be done by himself, or by his Warrant. I know the Perverseness and even Inadvertance of Men, make them run upon their Adversary, to give themselves that great, but inhuman Pleasure of Revenge, not so much delighting in Justice, as in the Misery of the Injurer; yet the Mighty God hath not only said, but sworn, *That he delights not in the Death of a Sinner*.

When I consider these Branches of Justice, as they are in God, I perceive great Difference in them as they are in Men, who by Attributive Justice may take nothing from any Man that is his own, except in the way of Punishment for a just Cause: but as to God all Mens Goods, Honour, Freedom, and even their Lives, are but precarious during God's Pleasure, and as the *Peculia* of Children or Servants; and therefore it is no Injustice in God to take them away, or to transfer the Right of them to any other. The *Israelites* not restoring

restoring those things that they had borrowed from the *Egyptians* at their Departure, was no Stealth or Injury, because they did it by God's Warrant.

It is more questionable whether it was congruous to God to have taken away the Life of his innocent Rational Creatures, by Annihilation, or by Death; wherein I do incline to the Negative: For I see not how it can consist with the Happiness of any Creature, if it have not Certainty of its blessed State: But I think also that the assurance of the Continuance thereof, is not from God's Justice, but from his Bounty, especially from his Faithfulness. There is nothing revealed of any Promise made to the Angels, and yet there is no doubt of their full assurance not to be annihilated, and it is hard to conceive how their Life can be otherwise taken away; nor do I know whether there was such a Promise made to Man in Innocency; for tho Death was threatened upon his Disobedience, the assurance of the perpetuity of Life did not thence necessarily follow: But innocent Angels and Men had sufficient ground to have full Trust in God, that if they offended him not, he would never destroy them, tho not from his Promise, for that had been by his Justice; but I am far clearer that God's Justice could not permit that he should torment his innocent Creatures, or make them miserable. I know some think that by his Sovereignty he might torment his innocent Rational Creatures, as having more Power over them than the Potter over his Clay, to make Vessels of Honour or Dishonour of them; but I have cleared my Mind as to that Point, that by the Vessels of Honour or Dishonour, are not meant the happy and miserable, but his free giving of
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Grace, by which they become honourable, or his permitting them to harden their Hearts, by which they become dishonourable; for that is said in Answer to an Objection, *Why doth God find fault with Men that their Hearts are hardened, for who hath resisted his Will?* Finding of fault cannot relate to innocent Misery.

I know some are puzzled to extricate themselves as to God's Command to *Abraham* to sacrifice his Son *Isaac*: I see no Difficulty in the Case as to God's Justice; for tho *Isaac* had been sacrificed, God could have restored him to Life, and so fulfilled his Promise, *That in Isaac all Nations should be blessed.* I conceive the Difficulty lies as to God's Unchangeableness, who hath never changed any Law of Nature that he wrote in Man's Heart; but *Abraham's* killing and sacrificing his own Son without a deserving Crime, is inconsistent with the Law of Man's Nature: But there was no certain ground for *Abraham* to conclude that his Son would be sacrificed, but only that God did prove his Obedience, who by an implicit Faith (which is only due to God) was obliged to proceed till he was stopped; tho he could not know how that Act could consist with the Law of Nature, yet he might still hope for a Reprieve, even when he lifted the Knife to give the fatal Blow, as the Event shewed: and I take this to be the best Instance of God's *voluntas signi*, where there is not *voluntas beneplaciti*; for here there was a presumed Will, or rather a Presumption of the Will of God from his Command, but it admitted a contrary Probation, the Voice from Heaven having warranted him to hold his Hand: This is also a clear Evidence that God does not always will to operate
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what he does command ; for his Will can never want its Effect, tho oft his Command doth, the Intent whereof is to oblige the Creature, and shew it its Duty.

I know some think they cannot enough exalt God's Sovereignty, if they admit any thing right but by his Will ; but they should remember that he is so Sovereign, as he is also Just, Bountiful and Faithful. They do too much detract from the Loveliness of God, that plead for him, as Courtiers for their Masters, who love not to hear, or give another Cause of their Commands, but Such is our Pleasure.

God's Promises do certainly infer his Attributive Justice to perform, and yet what he performs may well be accounted a free Gift, because before his Promise he was not only free, but indifferent ; but having promised, he is not indifferent as to Performance. The Performance of God's Promise is attributed oft-times to his Faithfulness, or to his Bounty ; but to speak accurately, it is only to be referred to his Justice : For after the manner of Men it is said, That God is faithful who hath promised ; where both Faithfulness and a Promise are joined : So God may promise that which his Justice would require without a Promise, as he does also to confirm Men, not only promise, but sometimes swear to perform.

Commutative Justice is not competent to God ; *For who hath given to him that he should repay ?* Yet such is his gracious Condescension to Men, that he hath frequently entered with them in Covenant, the most excellent of which is the Covenant of Grace, which yet cannot be called commutative, as if God's part and Man's part were the mutual Causes ;

Causes; every converted Man enters in the Covenant of Grace by his Consent to God's offer of Grace. But the freest Grant requires Acceptance, when by way of Offer, in which it differs from an absolute Gift, which is effectual, if it be not rejected, but Man's Acceptance or Consent is also by the Gift and Grace of God.

The Distributive Justice of God consists in the distribution of Rewards and Punishments, and hence it is divided into Premiative and Punitive Justice, both are exactly proportioned to the occasion to which God's Holiness directs it self, which is called the deserving or meritorious Cause, no other way than as an occasion comes in among Causes, when a merciful Man sees a miserable, he hath Compassion and helps him: Could this Miser boast that his Misery is the cause of the Mercy? No, it was indeed the occasion of it, but the Man's Mercifulness was the Cause: So it is in God's Justice, tho Mankind were like the Beasts of the Field, and the Fish of the Sea, devouring each other, it could not reach God, but it is the Congruity of his glorious Nature, which is the cause why he rewards the Good, and punisheth the Evil.

All Christians agree, that God's Punitive Justice is adjusted to desert or merit, but some have been so impudent, as to claim eternal Happiness by their own Merit, and that God could not be just, if he did not give it, not by his Promise, nor for Christ's Merit alone, as only taking away Punishment, but they think the Reward is from their own Merit. Others have so much abhorred this that they have run to the other Extream, holding that all Rewards are absolutely free without any thing of Justice; so that God should only have Punitive, and not Premi-

Premiative Justice, as Man's Condition now standeth after the Fall: And that if Man had not fallen he had by his Merit been translated into the Heavenly Estate, not by God's Promise, or by his Bounty, but by his Premiative Justice; but that now Man having fallen, nothing belongs to him by the Premiative Justice of God. There are many and great Authorities of Learned Men on all hands in this matter; but when I look up to God, and make use of the Light of Scripture and Reason he hath given me, I cannot assent to either of these Extreame, when I consider that God hath with so strong an Asseveration declared, *Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous*; to whom he saith also, *That it is just with God to give Tribulation to them that trouble you, and to give to you that are troubled Peace with us, and that God is not unrighteous to forget their Labour of Love*; yet these Righteous were not Innocents. I am not moved with that Argument, That all sinful Men even when regenerated do deserve eternal Damnation, tho for Christ's sake it be forgiven; and therefore if any thing they could do could deserve Good from God, they forfeit that by their deserving Death; for one may as well withhold from an Enemy that which was due, as take from him that which was his own: But when I consider that Christ hath by his Merit through the Covenant of Grace procured a full Pardon of all the Sins of the Regenerate through Repentance and Faith, both the Similitude and the Reason of it fail; for he hath taken away the Enmity, and hath made Reconciliation, whereby the Justified become not only Servants, but Sons, Heirs and Co-heirs with Christ of Glory.

I am far from fancying that any meer Creature doth, or could deserve the Glory of Heaven, no not *Adam*, tho he had continued innocent, nor the most glorious Seraphim. The Angels were created in the state of Celestial Glory, which was by God's free Bounty; they could pretend no Merit for deserving that Glory that they had at the first instant of their Being; nor do I believe that their Confirmation and Assurance is an Act granted by God of rewarding Justice, but of free Bounty, it being so high an Advancement from a fallible to an infallible State, which the best of their Service could not deserve. It was congruous to the Freedom of God, and the Dependance of his Creatures, and his Dominion and Government of them, that they should all be capable of Rewards and Punishments, and be ruled by the righteous Laws of God, and that therefore they should be in a labile Estate; and even in that Estate God did reward the Improvement of their Natural Capacities, by adding farther degrees to them of their Love to him and Joy in him, which crowns their Happiness: but his Promise, or the Manifestation of his Purpose, that if during their Trial they were faithful in that fallible Estate, he would never suffer them to fall. I do not doubt that they acknowledg it as his free Bounty, and even in that confirmed Estate their Perfections can never be so great but they can be increased, and therefore there is still place for God's Premiative Justice.

If then the Angels have the Celestial Glory without Merit, by meer Bounty, and yet God by his Premiative Justice is still adding to their Perfections, which is clearly revealed by the Fall of
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the evil Angels, and that these that stood are declared to be the elect Angels, (whence all I have said will follow) could Man, tho innocent, pretend by Merit and Justice, to arrogate more to himself than the Angels? He was created innocent, able to have so continued, but in all Perfections far inferiour to the Angels. In his fallible Estate he was capable of God's rewarding Justice, as were the Angels in the like Estate before Confirmation: But could he have deserved Confirmation and Exaltation, from an Animal to an Angelical, from an Earthly to an Heavenly State? At Man's Creation God had promised him Immortality, not by his Nature, for his Body was fragile, and might by second Causes have been rendered unserviceable to his Soul, but only by God's Providence, he behoved to eat, drink, sleep, rest. We have no ground to believe that his Children so soon as they were born needed not his Care and Trouble, tho they had been as perfect as Christ in the State of his Infancy: Can it be thought that Man by his Merit could deserve Celestial Glory and Confirmation, freeing him from the hazard of falling in Sin, or losing that blessed State by Mortality or Annihilation? and yet there is no ground to doubt, that as the Angels were confirmed after their Trial, so would Men have been, which with the Immortality God had promised, he lost, and became mortal and miserable by eating the forbidden Fruit. Whence there is enough to satisfy the Consciences of Men, of God's Dispensation in suffering *Adam* to fall, whereby neither he nor any of his Posterity, could ever by themselves recover that blessed Estate which he had lost to himself and them by his Fall; albeit they could

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not conceive how God could eternally torment all his Posterity for his Sin, tho they had none of their own: But blessed be God that Christ was separate from Sin unto the end, and became the second *Adam*, expiating Sin, and procuring for the Elect that Blessedness which through *Adam's* Fall they had lost.

How unreasonable then and odious must the Meritmongers of *Rome* be, who not only hold that sinful Men acquire Heaven by their Merits, but that they have so great store of Works of Supererrogation, to which they were forced to flee, when the horrid Grossness of the Pope's setting to Sale Indulgences for Money, through most of the Dominions of his Obedience, had awakened a great part of the World, to see that it was impossible he could be Christ's Vicar on Earth, but rather the Antichrist? There was no Evasion with any pretence, but that there was a Treasure of the Supererrogatory Merits of the Saints, whereof the Pope was the sole Dispenser; and yet tho that Treasure was not pretended to be infinite and inexhaustable, the Popes neither knew what was the measure of it, nor how much was exhausted, and how much remained, or if any thing at all; for there was no Record kept of what Indulgences were given out, or how much they needed that got them, nor could there be, seeing the Indulgences were not given by the Popes immediately and upon trial, but were gifted and farmed to his Emissaries, who were the vilest of Men, who rendered that Religion absolutely ridiculous. I pity the deceived Multitude of that Synagogue, but I abhor their chief Leaders, and without the breach of Charity, I think I may safely say, that many
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of them must be convinced of gross Errors in that Church, but cannot acknowledg them because of the Canons already made, unless therewith they quit Infallibilty, which is the Pillar and Ground of their Faith.

God's Punitive Justice has not escaped dangerous Errors, not only from those who make all God's Laws to be only obliging by his Will, so that he may not only dispense with them without any Punishment, but may abrogate them, (of which I have cleared my self before in meditating upon his Holiness) but from those that think his Justice requires no exact Proportion between the Crime and the Punishment, but that it is meerly Arbitrary, that God might have accepted the Sacrifice of a Lamb for the greatest Sin, or the Penance that Men inflict upon themselves; and that the Mosaical Sacrifices did expiate Sin of themselves, not as Types of the only one satisfying Sacrifice of Christ.

I am convinced that the very Nature of the Justice of God imports an exact Proportion of Rewards and Punishments to the Objects of them, and that therein God's Justice differs from the Justice of Man, who neither can know the exact Proportion, nor can adjust a Punishment to expiate any Sin. Mens Justice in Punishments are not to satisfy Justice, or to expiate Crimes past, but to prevent and suppress them for time to come; and therefore they become unjust and cruel, by applying Arbitrary Punishments more than are needful to suppress the Crimes: but God perfectly knows the just Proportion of Rewards and Punishments, and he hath not that Indifferency in applying them as he hath in his Acts of Bounty:

Sin is so opposite and so odious to God, that his Aversion to it is infinite, and therefore it cannot be expiated but by a Punishment infinite in Value ; and therefore in the Damned, Punishment is only eternal, because in no Time the finite Natures of Creatures can bear an infinite Punishment. The Sins of the Elect are expiated by the Sufferings of Christ, which were short in Time, but infinite in Value, because of the Dignity of the Person that suffered ; yet God having denounced the Wages of Sin to be Death, both by the Separation of the Soul and Body, and by the Separation of both from the Joy arising from God's Countenance, Justice required that the Mediator should suffer both, tho but for a short time, in his Agony in the Garden, and on the Cross, when innocent Nature made him cry out in the one, *that if it were possible that Cup might be removed*, yet with voluntary Submission ; and in the other when he said, *My God ! My God ! why hast thou forsaken me ?* They must be strangely deluded, that attribute that Cry to the Pains or Sense of Death ; for therein he should have been exceeded by innumerable Martyrs, none of which cried that they were forsaken of God ; and many have triumphed over their Tormentors, and have sung in the midst of the Flames.

I think they are both bold and ignorant, who presume to assert, that any Suffering of Christ without Death had been sufficient to expiate the Sins of the Elect : None but God can know the just Punishment of Sin. Common Reason may assure that God would not afflict his innocent Son in vain, but Revelation putteth it beyond doubt by the Apostle's arguing against the Possibility of Salvation by Works of the Law, saying, *If Righteousness*

eousness come by the Law, then Christ is dead in vain. It is necessarily understood, as in all such Arguments, but that is impossible, that Christ should have died in vain; nor would it conclude if by dying in vain were understood dying to no purpose: For tho it had been indifferent to God to have brought Salvation by the Law, or by the Death of Christ; yet neither of the ways had been in vain, that is, to no purpose, which soever of the two God had chosen: But then it would not have concluded, that Righteousness could not have come by the Law, therefore *in vain* must be understood, as ordinarily it is, that which is needless or unnecessary, and then the Argument is clear and convincing, thus: If Righteousness had been by the Law, then Christ's dying had been needless, because the Law alone could have brought Righteousness; but it is impossible that Christ should have died when there was no necessity for it, therefore the Law nor no other way could do it.

There is another dangerous Mistake about God's Punitive Justice, as if the Consideration of his Punishment were to compensate the Displeasure he had from Sin, by his Pleasure in the suffering of his Creature, as Men commonly do; but the true Consideration is the Manifestation of his Glory, in his Aversion from Sin: for, *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner.* He hath no Pleasure in the Misery of his Creature. It is another Mistake of Guilt and Punishment, that it is a Debt, whereby the Sinner is obliged to undergo the Punishment. It may be called a Debt, as it is called a Prison or a Bondage; neither is the Satisfaction for Sin properly a Payment: For if it

were a Debt, a Criminal should be obliged in Justice to offer himself to pay that Debt, which yet not only he ought not, but he may not do: Neither doth a Judg proceed to Punishment, as receiving a Debt from the Criminal, but by his own Authority. If Christ's Satisfaction for Sin were a Payment, it would follow that no Man should mourn for Sin, because Christ having satisfied, there remained no more Debt or Guilt of Sin: which hath driven many into that pernicious Error, whence they are called *Antinomians*; and it would highly derogate from the Goodness of God, if he did only take that Payment from the Cautioner, that was due by the principal Debtor. But if the Satisfaction be by manifesting God's Abhorrence of Sin, it gives great Light to Christ's Satisfaction interceding for Sinners, and offering that the Father should manifest as much of his Abhorrence of Sin upon him, as if all Mankind had been made eternally miserable, that as the second *Adam* he might make them all capable of Salvation, and the Elect secured in it.

The Judicial Justice of God is that which he exerciseth as Judg of all the World, which stands not only in Rewards and Punishments, but also in giving every rational Creature its Right, or its own, whether it be by retaining the Rights they have without Molestation, or by attaining these which they possess not. God would never suffer any rational Creature to want its Right, to give it to any other Creature, if it were not for Sin. Judicial Justice calling the Party that he may be heard, if he have any thing can be said, and that the Fact must be proved, is implied in the Nature of it, and morally necessary, which the great
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Judg of the World observes by himself, or by his Deputies. By himself he called *Adam* and *Eve*, and asked first *Adam*, *Hast thou eaten of the Tree whereof I commanded thee thou shouldst not eat?* and he heard his weak Plea; and the Man said, *The Woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the Tree, and I did eat.* Then he called the Woman, and said to her, *What is this that thou hast done?* and he heard also her Plea, who said, *The Serpent beguiled me, and I did eat.* In these Accusations there was both the Law adduced and applied to the Fact violating it, and the Proof by their own judicial Confession; both their Pleas were rejected, and just Judgment pronounced against them, but immediately a Mediator was intimated, and thereby hope of Mercy. When *Cain* killed his Brother *Abel*, before God pronounced Sentence against him, he calls him, saying, *What hast thou done?* The Voice of thy Brother's Blood crieth unto me from the Ground. There is the Proof, the Blood being yet fresh upon the Ground; *Cain* makes no Defence, therefore God pronounceth this Sentence, *Thou art accursed, a Fugitive and a Vagabond shalt thou be on the Earth:* yet even to *Cain* there was something of Favour admixed; for God spared the Temporal Judgment by Death, by his sole Prerogative, and therefore he set a Mark upon *Cain*, to prohibit all to execute the just Sentence of Death against him; the Justice whereof *Cain* acknowledged, saying, that every one that findeth me shall slay me, which could not import an unwarrantable Revenge, as if all Men would be wicked to multiply Slaughter without Warrant.

God's Judicial Justice by his Deputies is chiefly by Man's own Conscience, which both accuses
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them, proves against them, and condemns them for all their Faults, until it be seduced or seared ; and then often God delays his Judgment till the Soul's appearing before him after Death, but sometimes he executes his Judgment by Men without Warrant, sometimes by other Accidents, and frequently by Judges deriving Authority from him, who therefore ought to follow the Rule and Pattern he hath given them, condemning no Man till they had called him to answer for himself, and giving him time and freedom to offer all his Defences, and adducing sufficient Proof of the Fact charged against him.

MEDITATION XV.

Upon the Mercy of God.

MY Thoughts in my last Meditation upon the Punitive Justice of God, and the Miseries thence arising, lead me to consider the Mercy of God, which presupposes Misery as the Object of it. The Mercy of God is a part and kind of his Goodness, but is a special kind of Goodness presupposing Misery ; therefore I could not distinctly consider it, till I considered the Misery arising from God's Justice. The Goodness of God which presupposes not Misery, is more properly called his Bounty or Benignity, in Benevolence or Beneficence. If *Adam* had not fallen, God's advancing him from an Animal

mal to an Angelical Estate, had been an Act of free Beneficence and Bounty ; but no Act of Mercy, for then *Adam* had never been miserable: Yet Mercy doth not always consider Misery as pre-existent, or as seen, present, or past, but as foreseen, which would come to pass if it were not prevented by Mercy ; and this is properly called Preventing Mercy, in contradiction to that which is called Healing or Curing Mercy. As Physicians use preventing Medicines, when they foresee the latent Causes of the Disease, that would come if these Causes were not removed, as well as healing Medicines to remove the Disease incumbent, the preventing Medicines are more useful, tho less sensible than the other : So are God's preventing Mercies ; God foresaw *Adam's* Fall, and the ensuing Misery to himself and his Posterity ; and on the Foresight and Consideration thereof, decreed to send his Son into the World, to assume the Nature of Man, and in it to suffer Death, and expiate his Justice, and to satisfy his Abhorrency of Sin : This Decree was preventing Mercy, not designed to prevent the Existence of Sin, but to prevent the Incurableness of it when it should exist, and to prevent the Evil of Punishment which would befall the Sinner, and to prevent the height and eternal Continuance of it ; whereby Infants and Idiots never commit Sin, and those who are saved, do never commit Sin after the State of Mortality. God doth also cure Sin after its Existence, not only absolutely in Glory, but in part in Mortality, removing the Rage and reigning Power of it.

Mercy is one of the natural innate Principles in Man, common to all Men, who so far arrive to Discre-

Discretion, as that they can discern the Misery of a Rational Creature, which worketh like an Instinct upon the view of the Object, without reasoning, and with such Propension, that tho oftentimes they would, they cannot forbear. Those who burn with Revenge or Envy, do relent when they see the Misery of that Creature to which they wished the worst of Evils, and their Misery may become so great, that there ariseth thence a Compassion and suffering with the miserable Creature, with a desire to relieve it.

Mercy therefore implies a Displeasure, or Grief for a miserable Creature, and a desire to relieve it, whether from Misery incumbent or imminent; so a merciful Man shelters a Creature from the Avenger. This natural Inclination of Mercy may be, and often is much abated and eradicated by contrary evil Inclinations and Custom; as those that murder for Gain, and too many become not only void of Compassion, but cruel, contrary to Mercy, delighting to behold the Misery of others: but then they are reckoned to put off Humanity, and that Pain that's felt in the Heart and Bowels upon the sight of Misery.

Misery is not every Evil of Suffering and Want, but the Prevalence of them, to which alone Mercy is applicable, which being an innate Inclination given to us of God, cannot but be pleasant to God the Giver, and is a Remainder of his Image in the Natural Conscience; he delighteth much in the Mercifulness of his Creatures, and it is an eminent Sign of those that are in his Favour, which appeareth by that Article of the Lord's Prayer, *Forgive us our Sins, as we forgive them that sin against us*; intimating that none can with hope ask Mercy
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of God who are not merciful. The Mercy of Creatures may often be exercised in Fellow-feeling or Compassion, when they are not able to help, but still there is a desire to help.

Mercy when effectual, consists in giving and forgiving, which is a giving of Remission or Pardon of that which may be exacted or inflicted by the Forgiver, in so far as it's in his Power; as when a Creditor forgives his poor Debtor, whom he might throw and detain in Prison, which is the Forgiveness of a Debt; or when an injured Person forbeareth to insist against the Injurer for Punishment, or absolutely passeth from him; which may be where there is a Debt of Reparation beside the Punishment, and may be also without these. Punishment is not properly a Debt, as I have cleared my self in the preceding Meditation; and therefore Mercy in Forgiveness of Punishment, is Forgiveness of a Crime or Fault, which God hath allowed the Injured to forgive to the Penitent, even to seventy and seven times: But there be Crimes which do more concern the Common-wealth than a particular Interest, whereunto the Example is pernicious; these cannot be forgiven by private Persons, and ought only to be forgiven by the Common-wealth, when the Punishment would give more Inconvenience to the Common-wealth than the Forbearance.

Mercy even in Creatures is not of Justice, as a Debt, but of Benignity: for tho it be very necessary for Mankind, and therefore God hath given a strong natural Propension to it before it be perverted, yet he hath not imposed it as a Debt to be punishable for the Omission, but rewarded for the Performace; and therefore it is said, to
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the Merciful he will be merciful ; for all that is due by Justice, stateth a Power to claim or exact in the Person to which it is due. It is an eminent Office of Humanity to relieve the Distressed, to give Alms to the Poor, yet they have no Power to claim or exact it.

By the Divine Vestige of Mercy in the Creature, I am helped to the more distinct Knowledge of the infinite Mercy of the Creator, wherein the Difference will easily appear both by Reason and Revelation ; I shall therefore compare the two in what they agree, and in what they disagree.

The Mercy of God and the Mercy of the Creature agree in this, that both respect a miserable Object, yet not so that it must be infinite and eternal Misery : For God hath Mercy on many of his Creatures, to whom he doth not forgive their Sins ; for he hath Mercy upon Nations and Communities, who are not capable of that kind of Pardon. How often hath he recorded his Mercy to Idolatrous *Israel*, when they cried to him in their Misery, and perhaps had Sorrow for that particular Sin, whereby they did nationally provoke, but it was not a Repentance unto Life, for that must be of all Sin, tho of some more eminently than of others ? God had Mercy on wicked *Ahab*, and said to the Prophet, *Dost thou not see how Ahab humbleth himself ?* yet *Ahab* was far from saving general Repentance. God hath Mercy on the Wicked generally in delaying the inflicting of his Judgments against them, sometimes during the course of a long Life : and many think that he hath Mercy on the Devils till the Day of Judgment.

It hath puzzled many eminent Divines, how it can consist with God's Justice to shew any Mercy to the Reprobate: for if without Satisfaction to his Justice he might be merciful, he might have forbore for ever to punish any Sin, much more to punish the Sin of the Elect; and if he might forbear Punishment of Sin for an hundred Years, no Man can determine when he behoved to begin, so that he might delay for a Million of Millions of Years.

The Difficulty is increased, because many good Men through the hatred of the Socinian, Popish and Arminian Opinion, that Christ died equally for all Men, and procured them universal Grace, that they might repent or not repent at their Option, run into the other Extream, that Christ purchased nothing but to the Elect; and therefore endeavour to loose the Knot by the resemblance of Civil Powers, whom Justice obligeth to punish, but leaves the Time to their Discretion. This Solution importeth nothing, for the Justice of Civil Powers is not to expiate, but to suppress Crimes: That which deserves eternal Punishment, can never be expiated by all that they are able to do; but God's Justice is for Expiation. I doubt not that the Mediator hath procured Temporal Mercies even for the Reprobate, and that tho by his Purchase there is no Grace given them, yet that it is sincerely offered to all that come to Discretion, and that it was the Reprobates fault that they did reject it, and will be their eternal Accusation against themselves, else how could it be said, *Turn ye, turn ye, Why will ye die?* Nor could it be complained by God, *That they would have none of him, that they hardened their Hearts, and stiffened their Necks* against

against him: Nor on the contrary, That his long-suffering Patience leads unto Repentance. Tho this may be said only for the Elect, it is also said, *I gave them time to repent, and they repented not;* which could only be meant of the Reprobate, who are frequently said to be inexcusable, that is, they have no Excuse that they have thrown themselves into Misery; yea their own Natural Conscience shall not suffer them to think that they were inevitably miserable. It is not enough to say, that the Reprobate are inexcusable, because there are many Sins that they might have omitted, and did not, if the Remainder were inevitably effectual for their Damnation.

I do not think that the outward Privileges of the Church, and the Tastes of the Powers of the World to come, and that Illumination that even Reprobates attain who never had true and saving Grace, in which they exceed the finest Heathens, are otherwise accountable than by the Purchase of Christ: Nay, I do not believe that the damned Spirits having liberty of going to and fro in the Earth, is from Mercy, as if their Damnation were allayed or abated till the general Judgment; but that they are sent out as the Executioners of God's Justice, being still in that Torment of Conscience wherein Hell doth consist, tho it be allayed by accidental Consequences, being by their acting somewhat diverted from the full poring on their Misery. God only knows the exact Proportion of Punishment and Sin, according to Merit; and as the Damned always continue and encrease in their Hatred against God, so their Misery may be increased.

There is also a Resemblance between the Mercy of the Creator and the Creature, that neither is
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extended to every kind of Evil; some Punishments may be so great that will not breed Pity in the most merciful, because of the Atrocity of the Crimes: so the Mercy of God extends not to the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which must imply a high measure of Knowledg of the Divine Perfections, and yet by the Exorbitancy of Self-love, a Hatred and Despise against God, as not bestowing so much as these malicious Wretches think he should. And I think that was a main Difference in the Fall of the damned Spirits, and *Adam's* Fall, tho he was innocent, and had a great measure of Knowledg and Happiness, yet far short of theirs, they abode not in that Station God placed them in; for by their Sin they desired to rise higher, and therefore in God's Justice they were brought exceeding much lower. How far they have lost of their Natural Perfections I know not, but sure they have lost their Moral Perfections, and that Joy wherewith once they were blessed: they tempted Man by the same Bait, by which they deceived themselves, inducing them to be discontent with what God had given, and that he had forbidden to eat of that Fruit, not as a Badg of their Obedience in an indifferent thing, as to which they had no inbred Principle to prompt them on either side, but because he envied the Happiness they would attain to by eating that Fruit which would make them wise, to know both Good and Evil: therefore the Devils seem to have sinned against the Holy Ghost, which Man being of a less Capacity, did not; and none but those Men that attained to the Gifts of Illumination, and the Taste of the Powers of the World to come, and yet do despise against God, cannot be restored, nor are not to be prayed for,

for, in whom no doubt Hell is begun by the tormenting of their Conscience: and therefore God's Way is equal, both as to Angels and Men; yet in Justice he was not obliged to have Mercy upon any Sinner, but it was not congruous to his glorious Nature to receive into Favour such horrid Sinners.

There is another Resemblance of the Mercy of the Creator and the Creature, that it is not equally to be applied to those who have the Offer of a Reconciliation upon Repentance, and do obstinately reject that Offer, and will continue to insist in, and approve the Injuries done. By Reflection on our own Mind we find it to be so in Men, and yet it is evident to be no part of our Essence or Nature; and therefore it must be an inbred Principle freely given of God, and a part of his Image. God hath incited us to forgive those that offend us to seventy and seven times, yet still it is upon their Return. Mercy may take place by Forgiveness simply given, without an Offer of Reconciliation, but it exceeds Humanity to forgive so far as not only not to endeavour Punishment, but to offer Reconciliation when it is obstinately refused.

There is yet another Resemblance of the Mercy of God and Man, that there is no Right in the Injurer to claim it, tho he may implore it, but it is an Act of Benignity and Goodness: God hath injured no Creature if he had never received into Favour any Sinner; *But he will have Mercy on whom he will have Mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth*: that is, he giveth the Offer of Mercy and Reconciliation, and permitteth the Wicked to reject the Offer, whereby they become more hardened in their Sin and Impenitence.

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But infinite is the Distance and the Difference between the Mercy of God, and the Mercy of Men. For;

1. Man's Mercy may by contrary Custom be eradicated, and Cruelty succeed in its place; Man's Mercy may be overcome with the frequency of Injuries: nothing like these can befall in the Mercy of God, which is unchangeable, and no multitude of Sins can be so great as should give Despair.

2. Man's Mercy if it be obtained and violated in the same kind is hardly renewed, but where God hath once given Pardon, no new Breach doth exclude it; yea he gives Repentance, exciting the Sinner thereto, that he may forgive suitably to his Nature, and oft accepts general Repentance of inadvertent Sins, and even habitual Repentance, where actual cannot be exerted, as in those that die before they have time to have an elicited Act of Repentance for Sins committed immediately before Death.

3. Man's Mercy doth oft go no further than Compassion, and desire to help without Ability. God's Omnipotence does ever make his Mercy effectual and compleat.

4. Man doth often forgive one Fault, and retain others; God's Forgiveness of Sin is ever entire and universal, where it is: for all Sins preceding are ever forgiven; where there is Repentance for all Sin; but where some Temporal Punishment is only forgiven, the Sin is not forgiven simply.

5. Man may repent that he did forgive, whether by the mutability of his Nature, or by the discovery of aggravating Circumstances unknown

when he forgave; nothing of this can occur to the Omniscient God.

6. Injuries may be so atrocious that exceed Man's Mercy (without supernatural Grace) in which he will never offer Reconciliation. No Sin can be so hainous, but that the Merit of Christ is sufficient for remitting it, not excepting the Sin against the Holy Ghost, which is not unpardonable by the Insufficiency of Christ's Merit, neither yet because there is less Power in Man to repent for that Sin than others, because he is utterly incapable to repent for any Sin till God give him the Grace of Repentance, but because it is incongruous to the Divine Nature, and to the Glory of God, to receive into favour such Sinners: But in all others, tho they were as Crimson, God offereth Pardon and Reconciliation, and will effectually give them, if the Offer be not obstinately rejected; yea the height of God's pardoning Mercy reaches so far, that he hath even had Mercy upon frequent and long Rejecters, pulling them as Firebrands out of the Fire, whose Souls did cleave to their Abominations; and he continueth many such Sinners in Life without kindling Hell in their Consciences, with design to magnify his Mercy upon them; wherein Consideration may be had of the Kindness he had to their Ancestors, or of their extraordinary Temptations, or simply by his absolutely free and unbounded Grace: but these Firebrands are but some and few, and ought not to encourage Sinners to cleave to their Sins, and reject the Offer of Mercy and Reconciliation. We have one clear Example of Pardon to the Thief on the Cross at the point of Death, that none might despair, and but one, that none might presume.

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God's long-suffering Patience and Forbearance of Sinners, are Acts of his Mercy, whereby the Effect of his Justice is delayed, which are never in vain; for either forgiving Mercy doth at last take place, or at least the Glory of God's Goodness is manifested upon obstinate, inexcusable, and self-condemned Sinners, not that he delights or designs to make them such, but to manifest the superabundance of his Grace, in giving them a sincere and true Offer of Reconciliation, and not by causing them to reject it, but by not causing them to entertain it, when his Glory did not require it.

The Mercy of God is a most eminent and most amiable Moral Perfection; his other Goodness doth either presuppose something in the Object, not as a Merit, but as a Mean. His Faithfulness supposeth the Faith of his Creatures, trusting or hoping for that Good which he hath not promised, nor shown that he hath purposed it. His Goodness in Creation, supposeth nothing in the Object for it, yet nothing against it; but his forgiving Mercy and Reconciliation presuppose those things which are extremely opposite, sometimes the most irrational Injury and Enmity, actually in some, and habitually in all by natural or acquired Inclinations.

Mercy is the most amiable Divine Perfection that provoketh the most fervent Love to God; as Christ said to the Woman who washed his Feet with her Tears, and wiped them with her Hair, *Her Sins which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much; but to whom little is forgiven, the same love little.*

There is more of Mercy expressed in the whole course of Scripture, than of all the other Divine

Perfections, the main Scope thereof being to shew the Mercy of God towards Mankind, which he foresaw lapsed in a miserable Condition, and of his inconceivable Mercy: he designed the way of their escape from Misery, and their becoming Heirs of Glory through the Satisfaction of his Son Christ Jesus; whereby he might give Mercy and Forgiveness, without inroaching upon his Justice, and so made both Mercy and Justice to meet together, and attain both their Effects.

When God manifested himself to his beloved *Moses*, and proclaimed his Name before him, by which he would be designed as his most proper Character, he said, *The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in Goodness and Truth, keeping Mercy for thousands, forgiving Iniquity, Transgression and Sin, and that will in no way clear the Guilty.* Mercy is the leading and inculcate Attribute, thrice repeated, Justice is last. The Paths of the Lord are not only said to be merciful, but Mercy *in abstracto*; and *his Mercy is plenteous, he is full of Mercy, his Mercy is multiplied, Mercy belongeth to him, he desireth Mercy rather than Sacrifice, his Mercy is tender, he is rich in Mercy, his Mercy is everlasting, it is his Saints Joy who sing of his Mercy.*

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MEDITATION XVI.

Upon the Faithfulness of God.

FAithfulness is that Perfection whereof Faith or Trust doth immediately lay hold, and rest. The Term is diversly taken, there is not another proper Word but it to signify both the being worthy of Trust and Faith, and the having Faith: But when it is applied to God, it imports not the Subject, but the fitted Object of the Faith, which doth import an Inclination to do that Good which is believed or hoped for, suitably to the Giver and Receiver, freely, without Right to claim it; where-ever there is a Right to claim, there is an Obligation or Tie to perform, and the Performance is an Act of Justice, not of Benignity, or meer Decency.

The moral Perfections of Men are of three sorts, Justice, Benignity and Decency; Justice implies an Obligation or Tie to perform, and a Right or Power to claim and exact. Benignity is an Inclination to do good to another, freely, without Necessity, or Obligation to do it, or Right to claim it; which sometimes respects its Object under no other Consideration than that it's capable of that Good, and this is specially called Goodness: Such is God's Goodness in Creation, Preservation, and giving those good things which are not believed or expected, such as Acts of

meer Liberality; but other Acts of Benignity are upon ſpecial Conſiderations, beſide the Capacity to receive, as Mercy to the Miſerable, tho they do not truſt or expect it; but Faithfulneſs conſiders the Object, as truſting or hoping, not ſimply; for one may truſt or hope for that that is not ſutable for him to receive, or for the Perſon truſted to give, and ſo it is an unwarrantable Expectation, and not Faith, but Preſumption: Such was the deſire of the Mother of *Zebedee's* Children to Chriſt, That the one might ſit on his Right-hand, and the other on his Left-hand in his Kingdom; and ſuch is commonly the Hope of the Hypocrite, who truſts to obtain Happineſs without Holineſs. But Faith muſt be a well-grounded Faith, hoping or truſting for ſuch things as are becoming the Perſon truſted to give, and the Truſter to receive, and that upon Conſideration that truſteth; for tho the Good done were both ſutable to the Giver and Receiver, yet were not given to the Receiver as truſting and hoping to receive, it were an Act of Goodneſs, but not an Act of Faithfulneſs. The third ſort of Moral Perfections is Decency, which reſpects the Actor only, and not any other, and is done alone, becauſe it is ſutable and becoming that Perſon ſo to behave. Every Vertue or Moral Perfection conſiſteth in a Congruity to the Actor, and ſo is Decency, whether the Act be terminate on the Actor, or on another: But there is no ſpecial Name to ſignify that Decency that terminates on the Actor, but it retains the common Name, and ſo is Decency ſtrictly taken.

As Man beareth the Image of God, the Light of Nature ſhews, that all thoſe Perfections which
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he gave Man, are originally and eminently in God. He is just, and acknowledges himself Debtor so to be, in the distribution of Rewards and Punishments, in the performance of his Promises, whence there is a Right to claim them, tho there be no Power to exact them: He is good, and doth good in some kind to all; he makes his Sun to shine, and his Rain to fall upon the Just and Unjust; he openeth his bountiful Hand, and bestows what is necessary for every living thing, while he allows it Life: He is merciful and pitieth the very Ravens when they cry for want of Food, and much more supplies the Necessities of Men, even when they do not trust or expect it. All these Perfections respect his Creatures, and it is evident that they are without Obligation, and in that differ from his Justice, and so is also his Providence and Government of the World: but his Truth and his Wisdom are Perfections terminated on himself, as their peculiar End, they are free, for none can be obliged to himself; yet they are more necessary than the Acts of Bounty, which he might forbear, but they are comprehended under the Decency proper to God on his own account, tho there had never been a Creature, he would ever have been true, his Thoughts being ever conform to their Objects.

The Faithfulness of God then is comprehended in his Bounty or Benignity, respecting his Creature as warrantably trusting in him.

As the Term Faithfulness is variously taken, so the thing is commonly very indistinctly, and sometimes erroneously understood, confounding Faithfulness with Justice and Truth; and supposing there is no Warrant for Faithfulness but upon

Promise, and upon the Truth of God in that Promise, which is a great Mistake; for the Performance of a Promise is an Act of Justice, and Truth is not an Object of Trust, but when Words or Signs to express it are emitted; but Faith may warrantably be where God hath made no Promise, nor expressed any Word. When God created Angels and Men, before he made any Promise to them, they did know from his excellent Nature, and firmly trust, that if they did not offend him he would never make them miserable, and they might have trusted for particular Favours, not in the way of Reward. I know no clear Evidence from Scripture, that God promised to *Adam* that he should never be annihilated, only I see that he threatneth Death if he transgressed his Command in eating the forbidden Fruit; whence it is collected that God promised him Eternal Life, and even Immortality, and that he entered into Covenant with him, wherein *Adam* willingly engaged himself to the Obedience of God, and God did promise Life and Immortality to him, to his Wife, and their Posterity, and to raise them from an Animal Life on Earth, to an Angelical Life in Heaven, without the Dissolution of Soul and Body by Death; and (as it is commonly believed) the good Angels after they had given proof of their Obedience, were confirmed, that they should never fall. There is no less ground to believe that the like Favour would have been granted to Man not only for himself, that he should not fall, but that a greater measure of Perfection should be given to his Posterity, that they might not be under the Necessity of falling; and it is evident and certain, that
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by his Transgression in eating the forbidden Fruit, he lost these Benefits both to himself and his Posterity; but by the infinite Mercy and Benignity of God, Christ the second *Adam* perfected and performed what the first *Adam* had lost.

Can any Man pretend that the particular Favours that the Saints have always prayed for from God, were all promised by God? or, did he express his Purpose to give them? No certainly, and yet they did warrantably trust, and prayed in Faith for them, and obtained that which they prayed for; whercof there are innumerable Examples in Scripture and Experience: And therefore it is said, that the fervent Prayer of the Godly avail-eth much: If the Import of Mens Prayers should only be, that God should be just in the performance of his Promise, and be as good his Word, I see not how Prayer could be said to avail much; for God would be true, and just whether any Creature prayed or not: But God granteth many things upon the earnest Prayer of his People, which were neither promised nor necessary, and had no other Conveniency but to satisfy their longing Desire, which if it be not incongruous for God to do, or them to receive, as being hurtful to them, if Faith be not wanting, the Effect will not fail. Was there either Necessity or Promise for the Prophet's stopping the Clouds of Heaven for three Years and six Months? and for obtaining Rain when there was no second Cause for it? Is it not warrantable to pray to be inclined or directed in the Choice of a Calling, a Match, or any lawful Undertaking, or for the Success of the Choice? Is there any Promise for these Particulars? Yea tho it be said by Christ to the Apostles, *That whatsoever ye shall ask*

ask the Father in my Name, he will do it, I take it rather to be a Declaration of God's Faithfulness, and of the Effect of faithful Prayer, not signifying an Engagement, but a Resolution: And I think it were a very unbecoming manner of praying, to say, Lord, Thou hast promised that whatsoever I demand in Christ's Name, thou wilt grant it; this I demand, and therefore I claim it as due by thy Justice and Truth, which thou canst not refuse. With God's Grace that never shall be my strain, God hath declared that he will give Salvation and Glory to all that shall have saving Faith, trusting to obtain these with Sutableness, which cannot be towards those who resolve to cleave to and pursue their Sins. Suppose this were not only a Declaration, but a proper Promise, and that the Performance were an Act of God's Justice and Truth, yet where hath he promised that he will give Faith to this or that Man that believeth? And should he that believeth claim Salvation, as an Act of Truth and Justice, and not as a free Act of God's Mercy and Benevolence, and specially as an Act of God's Faithfulness, that he will not disappoint the becoming Hope or Trust of his Creature?

Trust among Men is not accounted when they obtain a clear Obligation, tho it had been granted freely, because the Obliged can be compelled to perform; but it is accounted a Trust when there is no Promise, but that from the Nature of the Deed it is to be presumed not to be a Donation in favour of the Person trusted, but with Intention and Expectation that he would restore to the Truster, or those who derive Right from him, upon demand. God of his Benignity to further
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the Faith of his Creatures, does not only promise where no Promise was necessary, but gives Seals and Oaths, not so much to secure the Effect, as to produce Faith, and therefore the Effect should ever be attributed to God's Faithfulness, and to the Creature's Faith, resting on that Faithfulness.

I know that God's Justice, Truth and Faithfulness have been oftentimes joined, as Man's also may. When a Man obtains a written valid Obligation, suppose it were for a valuable Consideration, there concurs the Justice of that Person, who may be compelled to perform his Truth; that as he expressed his Purpose to perform, so truly he so intended, his Faithfulness also in so far only as that it is expected he will punctually and readily perform without Compulsion, and he were unfaithful if he did not so perform, untrue if he did not intend to perform when he engaged, as well as unjust by not performing. These may all concur in God, but his Justice in performing his Promise, and his Truth in intending to perform it, can never be separated; yet his Faithfulness may be without them in particular Acts, so may his Justice in Rewards and Punishments be without any Word, and consequently without Truth in that Word, and both may be without exerting Faithfulness.

The Ground and Warrant of Faith is the excellent Disposition of the Person trusted, whereby it were incongruous to him to disappoint the Expectation and Confidence which he knew were placed in him, and were not rejected by him: The Psalmist saith, *They that know thy Name, will put their Trust in thee; for thou Lord hast not forsaken them that seek thee.* Here the Knowledge of
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God's Name, which signifies his excellent Nature, is the ground of Trust, and specially that Divine Perfection that he will not forsake them that seek him. Here is no relation to a Promise, the Psalmist founds his Prayer both on God's Faithfulness and on his Justice in performing his Promise, and not on this alone, when he saith, *Hear my Prayer, O Lord, give Ear to my Supplications; in thy Faithfulness answer me, and in thy Righteousness; where these are clearly distinguished.* The same Psalmist saith in another place, *Thy Mercy, O Lord, is in the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reaches unto the Clouds; Thy Righteousness is like the great Mountains:* where God's Faithfulness and his Righteousness are clearly diversified. If one should trust in a powerful virtuous Person, if he did not make his Trust known to that Person, he could not be said to disappoint him, or to fail in Faithfulness; yet the Manifestation of Confidence may be without Words, and sometimes it is unfit to be by Words, and it may be abstract from Particulars, and be left to the Discretion of the Person trusted: So the Attendance, the Dependance, the humble and kindly Countenance may better express Confidence than Words, which are more frequently false. Courtiers do manifest their Confidence in Princes, Souldiers in their Generals, and Creatures may so express their Confidence in God; but it is more proper to pray to God in Faith for particular Favours, as being more the Homage and Dependance of his Creature, than the urging his Justice on general Promises.

It is not Faith, but Folly, to trust in any but those that are indued with Vertue and moral Perfections,

fections, or in these for things that the Person trusted hath not, or which were unbecoming for him to bestow ; therefore there is no Creature on which there can be laid entire and absolute Faith, because the Inconveniency may occur, that they cannot satisfy. In this Sense God may be said to be only Faithful, as well as only Wise and Good ; one may trust when he is not wise in trusting, yet he may become unfaithful that admitted the Trust : they were very unwise that would trust a Secret to a Liar, or the managing of an Affair to an imprudent Person, or Money to a Prodigal ; yet if they did admit of the Trust, they were unfaithful if they failed.

It is very evident, that it is highly congruous, and worthy of the Divine Perfections to be faithful, and it were inconsistent with these, to disappoint the Faith of his Creatures, trusting in him for things fit for him to give, and them to receive, without consideration of any Promise, or Declaration of his purpose so to do. It is fully evident, that it were unsutable to him to give Happiness to them that love not Holiness, or to pardon Sin to those whose Souls cleave to it, or to give the highest Favour to such, or Glory to any in the next Life, to whom he never gave Grace in this, in Act or Inclination, which by the very Light of Nature do appear ; but by Revelation God hath clearly declared in what Things he will not allow of Trust or Faith in him, or Hope from him, especially for obtaining Reconciliation, Forgiveness and Happiness, and hath expressly declared when Faith is saving. God bestows many good Things out of Commiseration, or meer Goodness upon those that have not saving Faith ; nor can I say,

say, that he doth not bestow some good Things upon such, even upon consideration of their trusting in him for them ; as by the Faith of Miracles, upon whose Confidence he exerted his supernatural Power, though at the great Day he rejects them who had that Faith. Those who do not by Word or Sign signify that they allow not the Confidence or Hope of these who pertinently signify it, do fail in their Faithfulness, if they disappoint them.

My Thoughts upon God's Faithfulness do exceedingly clear me in that eminent Point, that Faith is the only Consideration on which God gives Pardon, Reconciliation and Happiness, and not upon Love, or any other good Work, as never to be claimed upon rewarding Justice or Merit, but of free Favour and Grace alone. Albeit Love to God, or Reverence and Obsequiousness to him, be more excellent Perfections than Faith, for in Faith the Creature hath Consideration of the return to it self, and much more in Fear, but Love is terminated alone upon God himself, and upon no return from God, which would make it defective. The Love of Gratitude is for what is already received, but the Love of God, purely on consideration of his infinite Perfections, is the highest moral Perfection of Creatures. If Happiness had been by the Creatures Love, Reverence or Obedience, it would have been by Justice and Debt, not by Grace ; as the Apostle says, *to him that worketh, the Reward is not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt* ; but being by Faith, there can be no pretence of Debt or Justice. There is no more ground for him that hopes or trusts, to attribute the Effect to himself, as deserving it by his Faith, than if the Miserable should imagine his Misery were the Cause of Mercy shown

shown him. I never find a Reward attributed to Faith; for tho it be said, *cast not away your Confidence, which hath great Recompence of Reward*, Confidence there is not Faith, but Forwardness and Boldness, for in the Original it is not ΠΙΣΤΙΣ, but ΠΑΡΗΣΙΑ. Though Faith were in the Power of fallen Man, he could have little more ground to boast of Happiness on occasion of it, than the Beggar of his Poverty, which is the occasion of Alms, or the Oppressed of Oppression, as the Cause of his Relief, or than the Infant or Idiot of his Salvation. God could have given all good Things without either Prayer or Faith, as he doth to Infants; but it is a far greater Measure of Benignity, to give that which is longed for, and desired by Prayer, and which is hoped and trusted by Faith; but saving Faith it self is not in Man's Power by Nature, or by universal Grace, but is given to the Elect in Conversion.

God hath frequently assumed the Title of faithful in the Scripture, as *the faithful God, the faithful Creator, the faithful Witness, the faithful Lord, and he that calleth is Faithful*. God can no more deny his Faithfulness, than he can deny himself; as it is said, if you believe not, yet he abideth faithful, he cannot deny himself.

Mercy taketh away Misery, but Faithfulness freely giveth eternal Glory, and withholdeth no good thing; rewarding Justice keeping proportion with Merit, Faithfulness hath no Bound.

Faithfulness is a most eminent Perfection, and moral Vertue; for the Breach of it is Treachery and Treason, much more abhorred by God and Man, than the failing in Performance of natural Obligations or Engagements, and therefore Treachery

chery hath the most atrocious Punishment.

I adore and bless thee O God, who hast exceeded all thy Goodness to Creatures in thy Faithfulness, which exceeds the Goodness of Creation, Preservation and Providence, rewarding Justice, and even Mercy it self, which only extends to Relief and Necessity, but Faith to all good Things, which are becoming thee to give, and thy believing Creatures to have.

MEDITATION XVII.

Upon the Wisdom of God.

WISDOM is the Divine Attribute nearest God's Decrees and Dispensations, whereby he contriveth all his Purposes and Decrees towards his Creatures, as is worthy of, and becoming his glorious Majesty, according to which all things do unchangeably and certainly come to pass; therefore I have resolved to meditate upon it immediately before his Dominion.

Wisdom is diversly taken, more extensively it comprehends all eminent Knowledg, contemplative or practical, and even the Skill of Arts, but more strictly it excludeth that Skill; but the most proper Signification of Wisdom relates only to Practice, and it is of the same Import with Prudence or Discretion, tho these are seldom attributed to God, but to Creatures; yet Wisdom is more strictly taken for sublime and universal Prudence,

dence, as to the whole Course of Life. One may be prudent in a comely and discreet Behaviour, carrying himself becomingly to every Person in common Converse, who may be faulty in his main Project, and so is not to be esteemed Wise, but he only who hath a right Design for his whole Life, and who chooseth fit Means for that Design. God hath given an unalterable Inclination to all his rational Creatures, to desire their own Happiness, which doth ever bring it self in remembrance, and is ordinarily their last End, tho God gave them a higher Principle, to make Him their last End; and they alone are wise who have the Glory and Pleasure of God for their last End, to which all their other Designs and Purposes are subordinate: that is the Wisdom which is from above, which the Apostle James doth excellently describe, that it is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easily to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality or Hypocrisy.

Wisdom useth to be taken as a part of Knowledge; yet tho Knowledge be in Wisdom, it is distinct from it, and consists more in the Will and Inclination to choose and follow only that which is morally good and fit. So it is said, to one is given by the Spirit the Word of Wisdom, to another the Word of Knowledge by the same Spirit. There may be Means to effectuate good Ends, which yet if chosen it would be no Act of Wisdom. We must not do Evil that Good may come; Fraud and Deceit are not only distinct from, but opposite to true Wisdom, no less than Force when used for that which it cannot, or ought not to be effectuated: And therefore the same Apostle saith, *the Wisdom that descendeth not from above is earthly, sensual*

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ful and devilish, which is but abusively called Wisdom, and is well expressed by three Terms, signifying three Kinds, the Wisdom of the Malicious is devilish, of the Voluptuous is fleshly, and that which is used to promote unwarrantable Profit, is worldly.

The Wisdom of God is excellent, it is infinite; tho it be certain and evidently apprehensible, yet is it incomprehensible and unsearchable: so saith the Psalmist, *Thy Thoughts are very deep*; and the Apostle saith, *O the depth of the Riches both of the Wisdom and Knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his Judgments, and his Ways past finding out?* Nothing can be added to, or abated from the Wisdom of God. It requireth no less Wisdom than his, fully to know his Wisdom: in Wisdom hath he made all his Works; and therefore we owe an implicit Faith unto his Wisdom. Tho we cannot perceive the reason of what he doth, we may innocently doubt whether some of his Acts be Acts of Justice or of Mercy, but we may never doubt but they are Acts of Wisdom; yea the Apostle to the Romans concludeth well, *To God only wise through Jesus Christ, be Glory for ever, Amen.* For he findeth Folly in his Angels, even the most glorious Seraphim. There have been many Things which they could never comprehend nor contrive, and there might be infinitely more. They are neither free of Ignorance, nor of innocent Error. There is no proportion between their Wisdom and God's; and therefore it is as nothing in his Sight. So that as there is none absolutely Good but He, so there is not any other absolutely Wise.

It were a Task never to be ended to pursue the Wisdom of God in all his Decrees and Dispensations,

tions, of which little can be reached in the State of Mortality; yea it will be the exercise of the Mind to Eternity, in the State of Glory, yielding and increasing a continual Delight. The innumerable variety of God's Creatures, their Parts, their Powers, their Preservation and Productions, afford matter of search and delight to the most glorious Angels: Therefore God saith to Job, *Where wast thou when I laid the Foundations of the Earth? declare if thou hast understanding, when the morning-Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for Joy.* Where the Sons of God must signify the Angels, who were created before the terrestrial Globe was framed and invested with all its Ornaments, when as yet Man was not created. I shall therefore only endeavour to excite my Admiration, by some few eminent Instances of the Wisdom of God, in which I cannot see so good a Method, as the Order God followed in his Dispensations, from whence his Decrees are inferred.

1. Then it was the Wisdom of God that he did not create the World so soon as he did decree it, whereby he shew'd that to his Perfection and Blessedness he had no need of it.

2. It was both the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that he did not with one Act of his Omnipotent *Fiat*, bring at once the whole Creation out of the barren Womb of nothing, but proceeded by Parts, that his Creatures might the more distinctly know it: therefore the first Act of Creation was that *To-bou-vo-bou*, which is commonly rendered the Chaos; as if all the Kinds and Parts of Creatures had been created in a jumbled confused Mass, and that the After-work as to Matter, had only been the uniting and ordering of them, which I

conceive to be a very unsutable Thought to the Wisdom of God, but rather that the first Matter was the same that is yet the pure *Æther*, being next to nothing, having neither Figure, Cohæſion, Preſſion or Motion; and yet was and is the neceſſary Mean of Communication among all the Species that were to be created. The Angels might exiſt in Vacuity, but they could not communicate their Thoughts at diſtance without a Medium: It is a groundleſs Fancy of ſome dreaming Monks, that the Angels communicate their Thoughts by their Will only, as if their Thoughts ſhould be known to the reſt when they would have them known, and ſecret when they would not. It is the incomunicable Property of God to work by the Will only; they make Impreſſions upon the *Æther*, which by the Rays thereof, may be communicated at whatever diſtance, yet theſe Impreſſions may be imperceivable by Men; for ſome Mens Ears are ſo perfect that they can hear a Whiſper at diſtance, which no other doth perceive, therefore it's more than probable that the pure *Æther* was created before the Angels, and ſo they were but ſix Days of older ſtanding than Man. It doth noways quadrate to the Wiſdom of God that theſe Days ſhould be underſtood Years, it being ſufficient diſtance by one Day for Creatures to obſerve the ſtately Steps of the Divine Procedure.

3. The Wiſdom of God appears in the variety of the Creation of rational Creatures, capable to know him, and bearing his Image. The Angels were all created together: it became the infinite Majeſty to have that glorious Chorus and Hoſt of innumerable Angels about his Throne, admiring him,

him, and ready to obey all his Commands; and therefore it was not fit that any of them should propagate their kind, which he reserved for Mankind, which were all to arise as Branches from one Stock.

4. It was by the Wisdom of God that he created the Angels wholly depending on himself, by an undispensible Obedience, whereby it was impossible that they could have been left wholly to themselves, or to have placed themselves or their Order as their last end. An Epicurean God unconcerned in the Actings of his Creatures, is but an inconsistent Chimera, and an Idol: Therefore the Angels could not be made with that Latitude of Liberty, that they should have been in all things indifferent, but that they should have inbred Principles, inclining them to choose and act suitably to the Divine Nature and their own.

5. It could not consist with the Divine Wisdom, that any Creature should have been created so perfect, that there could be no place by Premiative Justice to encrease their Perfection, or that God should forgive their Transgressions without manifesting his infinite Abhorrence of Sin by a perpetual Exclusion from his Favour and Face, unless they had an infinite Mediator to satisfy his Justice for them.

6. The infinite Wisdom of God did require that he would never create a Creature which he could not govern, and make them effectually do whatsoever were his Pleasure: For tho it had been essential to Freedom, that it could not be effectually and certainly governed by another; yet seeing God had no need of such Creatures, he would then not have created them. Government doth

necessarily require Rewards and Punishments, therefore his Wisdom required that his Rational Creatures should be created fallible: for if they could not fall and transgress, they were not capable of Punishment; and if all their Natural Principles and Inclinations had been given them in as much Strength as their desire of their own Happiness, wherein they cannot possibly transgress by contrary Desire, they had been capable of no Rewards by God's Premiative Justice.

Hence the Folly of Man might be cured, when he thinks, Why did God suffer Sin to come into the World? Could he not have prevented the Sin of the Angels who fell, by making them impeccable, as he hath made the persevering Angels, whom he calls his Elect Angels? I see no reason that God hath made their Inclinations against all Sin, as strong as their Aversion to Misery, but that he hath given them Inclinations effectual for all their Duties, and much stronger than at first; and thereby they are certain not to fall, but not necessarily, *necessitate Consequentis*, but that they may be still meriting and getting greater Perfections.

7. It is by the Divine Wisdom, as well as by his Goodness, that albeit all his Rational Creatures were at first fallible, they should not still continue so; for it were a very low degree of Happiness to be in a perpetual danger and terror of falling: Therefore after some time of trial he confirmed the persevering Angels, and made them without hazard of falling.

8. The Wisdom of God is seen as well as his Freedom, in that he provided no Remedy for fallen Angels as he did for Man, they being of much more Perfection than Man, and free from all carnal

nal Appetites, and yet after partaking Celestial Joy, they hated God that gave it, and perverted Man.

9. The Wisdom of God is seen in that he would make his Rational Creatures obliged to be devoted to him, and that their Obedience should not be in Trifles or indifferent Things, but in such Things as require Diligence and Attention; and therefore the Principle of Self-love was so given both to Men and Angels, which by their Inadvertence did exceed, and was the Cause of the Fall of both.

10. By the Wisdom of God we are sure that he doth nothing in vain: that is in vain which hath no good End or Use; it is also in vain to do more than what is convenient for the End designed.

The next Act of Creation, was the Creation of Light in the Celestial Fire, by such a Motion that when not impeded, doth perpetually vibrate and agitate the Æther, which was at first in one Hemisphere of the Æther, before it was collected and formed into the Sun and fixed Stars.

11. The Wisdom of God doth eminently appear in so excellent a Contrivance of the Propagation of Light by the rotation and interfering of the little Particles of Fire, whereby the Æther is continually and necessarily agitated and vibrated by streight Lines, unless they be reflected, the fulness of the Æther without any Vacuity holding all the Rays streight, and so the least Force can vibrate these Rays to any possible Distance, with as little Force as at the nearest Distance, because the Æther hath no Resistance; so that the Rays of Light from a Candle can go as far as the Rays of the Sun, tho it ~~cannot~~ be seen by Men at a great distance;

distance; seeing they cannot perceive Light but by many Rays falling on their Eyes, and the Rays of a little Object do so soon become distant from one another from a small Fountain, that more of them cannot fall upon so little an Object as the Eye. The Particles of Fire severally have so small Force that their rolling can easily be stopped, by which Men can so easily be master of raising and quenching Fire: In all which the wonderful Wisdom of the Divine Contrivance is resplendent.


The Work of the second Day of the Creation, was the creating of that Power of Motion, or Pression of the several Parts of the Æther, whereby one Sphere of it moved about, compleating its Motion in twenty four hours, and thereby the Light that was created in the one Hemisphere of the Æther illuminating one side of the Earth, was carried about, and made Day and Night in the same way that the Sun now doth, and so made Day and Night before the Sun was created: That Æther is called in the English Translation the Firmament, but by the Dutch and Latin Translation is more accurately called the *Expansum*, or the Bulk, having Parts stretched out, and is called the Waters, but more accurately the Fluid, which comprehends both Water and Æther: for the same Word was used before that the Spirit moved upon the Waters, there being nothing then but the Chaos or pure Æther, and thereafter it is called Heaven. which is that part of Heaven in which the Sun and the Planets were after created; for that Heaven is said to divide the Waters above from the Waters beneath, that is, the Æther in which the fixed Stars are, above the Planetary Æther, and the Æther in which the Terraqueous
Globe

Globe is, being the Waters under the Planetary Sphere.

In the third Day of the Creation, that part of the Fluid which is now more strictly and properly called the Water, and which surrounded the whole Face of the Earth, was gathered together; God having made the Surface of the Earth which at first was round, unequal by Mountains, Vallies and Plains, and by that great and hollow Receptacle in which the Sea is contain'd, and thereby the dry Land appeared, and the Waters of the Sea could never return to cover the Face of it, tho by the miraculous Deluge not only all the Clouds, which are but rarified Water, fell down in Showers upon the Earth, but much more of the Æther was turned into Water: the Clouds were but raised after the Separation of Sea and Land; for it is said, *There went up a Mist from the Earth, and watered the whole Face of the Ground,* the Return whereof could not have covered the Mountains. After the Separation, in the same day the creating Will of God said, *Let the Earth bring forth Grass, Herbs, and Trees,* which did immediately take Effect, and it was so.

In the Works of this Day the wonderful Wisdom of God doth gloriously appear;

1. In the Structure of the Terraqueous Globe, being of a round Globular Figure, most capable of the Vicissitudes of Day and Night, and of the several Seasons, ballanced by its own Weight in the midst of the World, and tho it be a very small part of the World; yet the whole visible World hath its Perfections directed towards it, not upon its own account, but as it is the Habitation fitted and destinated for Mankind. Its Figure makes
it



it fit for Man's Habitation upon all the sides and parts of it, being so contrived, that near both the Poles there is nothing but the vast Ocean, where if there had been dry Land it had been altogether uninhabitable.

2. The Figure of the Earth in its Inequalities sheweth the Wisdom of God, that thereby the Sea is hemmed in, which is majestically expressed by God in his humbling *Job*, saying, *Who shut up the Sea with Doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the Womb, and brake up, for it is my decreed place, and set Bars and Doors, and said, Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further, and here shall thy proud Waves be stayed.* By the Mountains also there are Vallies, whence the Rain that falls on the Mountains runneth down into Vallies, and makes them fruitful; and in the Mountains there are Fountains perpetually flowing, whence arise Rivulets, and by their Concourse Rivers running down into the Sea, and making a perpetual Circulation of Water from the Sea into these Fountains, and from the Fountains back into the Sea, so making perpetual Motion, which God only hath immediately made. By these Rivers there is not only Fruitfulness in the Vallies, by the reciprocal Vapours arising from them, and returning to them, and the Lands about them by an unending Intercourse; they are the Marches of Countries, and give much retardment and stop to the Invasion of the Inhabitants on either side in time of War, but in time of Peace make an easy Intercourse and Commerce among Men where they are navigable, which in many is continued for many hundred Miles. If the Earth had been exactly round, the Surface of it had been much less, and there could have

have been no Rivers, because there could have been no Descent. The Mountains also serve to give shelter against the Excess of the Sun, and shelter against the Tempest of the Wind.

3. In the Mountains all sorts of Metals are found, which were partly created, and partly gathered, so that they have a kind of Growth like Trees.

4. The Mountains also are like *Eliopils*, the Wind springing from their Caverns, from some of them so constantly and strongly, that from divers sides of the same Mountains there are Anniversary Winds, keeping their fixed Periods, whereby Men know to sail from one Country to another, and to return by the vast Ocean; but the nearer Distances where Men must pass in short time, the Winds are variable that may serve them both to come and go; and the wonderful Providence of God is seen in them, that Men are furthered or stopped in their Designs according to his Purpose, and may warrantably trust and pray to be served by these Winds without tempting God by desiring a Miracle: Tho the Winds be the necessary Products of inscient Matter; yet God foresaw both the Exigence, Faith, and Prayers of all his Creatures, and made the course of Nature to answer them, as well as sometimes on their Prayers he changes the course of Nature. If God in his Wisdom had not provided both these fixed and variable Winds, the Intercourse and Communion of Mankind had been very small, expensive and troublesome; it had been an unpleasant and dangerous undertaking of a Voyage of many Months, if it had always been liable to contrary Winds; and no less inconvenient in short Voyages, if Men
could

could not go and return for many Months together, until the turning of these stated Winds; and if there were no Winds there were little Benefit by Rivers, and none at all by the vast Ocean.

It makes no Exception from the Wisdom of God, that all the Earth is not equally fertile; for if it were it would be little noticed or valued; and beside, God has ballanced well the Advantages of the fertile and barren, warm and cold Regions. In the cold Regions there is long Life, much Health, great Strength and Courage, little Provocation to Luxury; so that in the fertile and warm Countries where there is much of Plenty and Luxury, much of Idleness and Thoughtfulness, more nimble Spirits, yet hardly hath their Wit been able to hold Ballance with the Strength and Courage of the other. In Countries which can scarcely sustain their Inhabitants, Necessity makes Invention, Diligence, and Improvement: What strange height of Glory and Riches have the *Venetians* come to, who had nothing at first but a few barren bare Rocks, where the overflowing of barbarous Nations forced them to settle their Habitation? What Riches and Strength have the *Hollanders* arisen to, who at first had but Spots of Ground in the midst of vast Marishes?

Neither affords it any Exception that the most of the Terraqueous Globe is Sea, seeing there is much more Land than is like ever to be fully improved and inhabited by Mankind, Revelation having discovered the Residence of Mankind to be but short upon Earth.

5. The Wisdom of God appears eminently in the Sea; for the Interourse, Commerce and Converse of Mankind, especially after the discovery of
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of the Direction of the Loadstone, whereby Mankind is now become like one great Society, and thereby both the Requisites of Nature and Art are communicated through the whole World, which could not effectually be attained by Rivers; for we see how many Impositions and Impediments are made in the Passages of these, and even in the narrow Channels of the Sea, which cannot be in the vast Ocean.

6. The stupendous Wisdom of God is seen in the Ebbing and Flowing of the Sea, which hath given a great Check to, and Abasement of the Pride of Man, who for so many thousand of Years have never arrived at any satisfying Discovery of the Causes thereof: In this also that the proudest Monarchs could never pretend the Dominion of the Sea, nor of any of that vast Multitude of Creatures therein, because it is capable of no Bounds, and so the least Fish in it can belong to no Man; and therefore of God alone it can be said, that he hath his Dominion in the Sea.

7. In this Day's Work is that glorious Garment of the Earth, which at first Creation was all clothed with Herbs, Grass and Trees of innumerable variety of Kinds, in which the Wisdom of God shineth forth sensibly.

(1.) In the Grass which is universally upon the whole Earth, and hath that singular in it, that it groweth continually. All other Herbs and Plants have their fixed times of rising, growing, decaying and falling, and there is no other Herb that springeth up of the same Root, but if the Herb be cut off, neither it nor the Root can be made further to grow: In which the wise Design of the Creator is, that the pleasant Verdure of the Earth
may

may ever continue in all Seasons of the Year, and that it may be the Food of the Beasts of the Earth, great and small, though in the divers Seasons Grass be in the divers Degrees of Perfection; hence Grass is not comprehended under the general Term of Herbs, which yield Seed after their several Kinds, to wit sensible Seeds framed by the Herbs, in which Seeds there are innumerable impalpable Seeds of the same kind, which arise from the Earth, enterr'd as by the Roots in the Earth, and are collected into these sensible Seeds on the Top of the Plants; which is evident, because in one of the most minute sensible Seeds a great many Herbs will arise, which must have their different Seeds so minute that no Sense can reach; but tho Grass hath also such sensible Seeds, it is seldom permitted to come to the Seed, but doth ever grow by the Root.

(2.) The Herbs are not universal over the whole Earth, nor every-where under the same Climate and Degree, but are wisely ordered to the several Places of the Earth, where they may be most useful for the peculiar Uses of Men and Beasts of that Place; and therefore many of them will not thrive and continue in other Places, tho there be no difference between the Sun and Soil of both, some of which will not continue in Verdure, others will not come to the maturity of a Flower, and most will not come to have perfect Seed or Fruit; or if the minute Seeds that were in their Bodies when transplanted come to a sensible Seed, they will not reciprocate and continue.

(3.) On this Day were the Trees created, which do comprehend the Shrubs, and the bulbous Plants, which are propagated not by the Seed, but by the
Root,

Root, sensibly divided in divers Slips, whence the Blade tho cut off doth grow again, are rather to be referred to the Trees to which that is common, than to the Herbs. This also is peculiar to Trees, that they have a different Fruit from their Seed, which Fruit serveth both to preserve, and to be the first Food of their Seeds; and also have a several use for Animals, for their Food or Physick; but other Trees have no Fruit beside their Seed, which is not so tender, whence is the division of Trees into Fruit-trees and Barren-trees.

(4.) The wonderful Wisdom of God appeareth in that innumerable variety not only of the same Kind, but of different kinds of Seeds, Herbs and Trees, their Roots, Flowers and Fruits; all which have an innumerable variety of the Uses to Man and Beasts, for Food and Physick, and yield Pleasure to Man by their Shape, Proportions, Colours, Smells and Tastes.

(5.) The unsearchable Wisdom of God is seen in the inward Frame of the Plants and Seeds by which their Aliment doth enter and pass to all their Parts whereby they grow, and new Parts sprout out, as Branches, Leaves, Flowers, Fruit in a most orderly Course, which must be by regular Passages and Conduits, like the Veins of Animals; some of these Passages are perceivable by the Eye or by Microscopes, but some of them are so exile, that no Sense by the assistance of any Instrument yet found can reach; the least sensible Seed, yea even the insensible, cannot grow till its Aliment be thrust into these Passages, and having no animal Motion, as the Passages of Animals have, the Aliment cannot proceed through these Passages, but as it is protruded by extrinsick Force: How wonderful
then

then must that contrivance be, which is so orderly sending out first Sprouts, then Leaves, then Flowers, then Fruits? And the Passages must be so various and curious, that they will only admit the proper Parts of their Aliment; and by recent Experiments it is found, that in these Passages there are *Valvulae*, like to those in the Veins of Animals, which give way to the Parts of the Aliment, but after it is entered, lest it recede, are closed, and suffer it not to repass. That part of the Aliment which makes the Flower, must be more fine and subtile than that which makes the Leaves, and the Sprouts and Passages thereof must require a greater Heat to expand them, that the several Parts of the Aliment may pass, which therefore succeed in their several Seasons. The Industry of Man hath not been able to discover whether the Leaves, Flowers and Fruits of Plants, be Parts of the Plants on which they grow, or whether they be different Plants having their own Seeds, which can only pass by the peculiar Passages of the several Plants, and grow from their own Seeds, seeing after they are compleat they fall off without Violence; and it is hard to apprehend how the grosser Passages of the principal Plants can by straining the Aliment through them, figure it in so admirable a Variety, whence such rare Colours and Proportions do arise: however it be, there must be the Contrivance of so much Wisdom as hath given and shall give all the Generations of Mankind a pleasant Exercise to discover more and more, yet leaving ever more undiscovered. This might and ought to check the Pride of Man in his Knowledge, and make him admire and adore the Wisdom of God in this so low a Step of his Works of Nature.

(6.) It is said, *Let the Earth bring forth Grass, &c.* as if it were a Command to the stupid and unfeeling Earth to work all these wonderful Things far exceeding its own Perfection, tho all the Efficacy of the Sun, of the Stars, and of Fire were adjoined, which has puzzled the most piercing Wits how these things could come to pass, and many have been forced to attribute all to the omnipotent Power of God alone, wherein they derogate highly from the Wisdom of his Contrivance, and are contrary to Revelation: Why should he say to the Earth, *Bring forth Grass, Herbs and Trees*, if nothing of the Earth had a casualty in them? How could it be said *that on the seventh Day God ended that which he had made, and he rested from all his Works*, if there be no Efficacy in Creatures, but only that he creates not new Matter? It might as well be said, the first Minute when he created the Chaos, that he had rested from all his Works, as that he rested on the seventh Day, if that were the meaning. But I am perswaded that on this third Day God created the Seeds of all Plants, with all their Parts and Passages, and disseminated them near the Surface of the whole Earth, as they might be most useful for his Ends, and that they do alwise necessarily grow, when and where their proper Aliment entereth in their Passages, and proceedeth by them.

(7.) The wonderful Wisdom and Goodness of God appears not only in the Pleasure, but in the Profit of all these Plants, as the several Kinds of them are the Food of the different Species of Animals, for which the several Animals have their Instincts by which they have Pleasure in them, Appetite to them, and Aversion to others, and yet more as they are the Physick of Animals, by their

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several

several Parts, solid or fluid, chiefly by their Juices and Spirits. The Brutes have their Instincts to know their Physick, which are not given to Man, that he might not be idle, but improve Sense, Reason and Experience, to know what parts or preparations of Plants served to prevent or cure all the Diseases that his Irregularity hath brought upon himself, or even upon the Beasts, which Virtues were discovered to *Adam*, whereby he was enabled to give Names to Beasts, fitted to express their peculiar and prime Perfections, which hath been communicated by Tradition, and increased by Experience; without such Tradition there can hardly be any rational Account given of the Medicinal Skill, which hath been so much propagated in the World, tho the Causes thereof be very little known, so that they could not be known by general Principles, and none were ever so industrious, as by hap-hazard to apply to every Disease all things applicable, to find out what would work, which might not warrantably be practised upon Man, lest thereby more might be killed than cured. Botanists have ranked Plants as they are congenerous by their agreeing in Shape, Colour, Taste and Smell; and of late they have observed Marks in them, as different Signatures, more exactly to show their physical Operations, all which comes far short of the Virtues of Plants which are already discovered, much more of all the Virtues which are in them.

Upon the fourth Day of the Creation, God created the Sun, the Moon and the Stars, the Sun to rule the Day and the Moon to rule the Night, for Signs and Seasons, and for Days and Years, which do not only give light through the whole
visible

visible World, but do also much enlighten the Minds of rational Creatures with the Knowledge of the Wisdom and Glory of the great Creator.

1. In the Sun, which is nothing else but a vast Globe of Fire, which was first dispersed in the one Hemisphere of Heaven, whereby Light and Darknes, Day and Night were divided, by equal Durations, for the first three Days, the Sun having been created but the fourth Day, yet it was an Act of Creation, by the sole Power of God, and not a Production by a natural Cause: there was also then formed a Globe of Æther, rolling continually about the Sun, to keep it perpetually in a globular Figure, shunning that irregular Shape, which necessarily follows the interfering of the Particles of Fire. Recent Observations of Astronomers have demonstrated, that the Sun is rolled about its own Center, in the same time that the Moon is moved about the Earth, which they observe from the Motion of some more regular Spots in the Sun.

The Sun is the far most glorious Creature in this visible World, as the Agitation of Fire gives Light by the continual Vibration of its Parts, so this glorious Globe of Fire, which no natural Cause can ever dissipate, suppress or extinguish, by the interfering of its Particles outward, it thrusts upon and darts out the Rays of the Æther, by streight Lines, so far as ever these can reach, till the Rays be stopped, reverberated, and reflected back into it self again, by the Earth, the Moon, or other dark Planets which have no Light of their own, but do reflect the Sun-Beams, a great Part whereof fall upon the Earth and illuminate it. The Sun illuminates more than one Hemisphere of

the Earth, because it is a far greater Body than the Earth.

The Sun hath its Motion about the Earth in a Year from West to East, under twelve Constellations commonly known, which are called the twelve Signs of the Zodiack, still moving obliquely, whereby it crosseth the diurnal Motion from South-West to North-East in one half of its Course, and from North-East to South-West in the other, whereby the whole Earth hath equal length of Light and Darkness every Year, when the Days are reckoned together: those Parts of the Earth that are equally distant from the North and South Poles, have their Days and Nights always equal, and those Parts of the Earth that are near both Poles, have but one Day and one Night in the Year, each being an half Year in length. The remanent Parts have their Days and Nights unequal except in the two Equinoctial Days and Nights, all which is performed by two uniform circular Motions of the Æther, the one by the Zodiack, and the other by the Equator. The Sun doth so far exceed in Light all the other Stars, as to the illumination of the Earth, that when it shines bright, their shining, tho it ceases not, is yet unperceivable.

The Sun is not only the chief Luminary and Fountain of Light, but likewise of Heat, which increaseth and decreaseth, not only every Day, as the Sun comes nearer to, or goes farthest from the Meridian or Southermost Places of the Earth, but also as it proceedeth toward the North and the South; and so the Heat is always equal about the middle of the Earth, but elsewhere unequal, whereby it makes the different
Seasons

Seasons of the Spring, when all Plants do sprout, and become green; of the Summer when the Flowers appear, and the Fruits begin; of the Harvest, when the Fruits come to Maturity, and of Winter, when the Fruits, Leaves and Herbs fall, whereby in the Wisdom and Prudence of God there is a Ballance of Enjoyment through the whole Earth, the variety of the Seasons where the Days are unequal, compensing the Pleasure where the Days are equal, because what is ordinary and doth not change is little noticed. We would be little sensible of the glorious Light of the Day, if we had not the Vicissitude of the Darknes of the Night; and albeit the Places near both Poles be far short of the Enjoyment of the rest, yet most part there is Sea, and not Land. There is also great conveniency of the Night for Man in the State of Mortality, whereby the Curtains of Heaven are drawn that he may sleep: The Earth also doth require a perpetual Vicissitude of the rising and falling of the Vapours, by which the Dews and Rains do water the Earth. Another Sun opposite to this would have made a perpetual Day, but with great Detriment to the Earth. The Wisdom of God is also seen in the Instincts of the ravenous Creatures, whereby they have no Inclination to go abroad in the Day-time, but in the Night; thereby Men and the tame and harmless Creatures are free of their Trouble, for which the Psalmist praiseth the Wisdom and Goodness of God; *Thou makest Darknes and it is Night, wherein all the Beasts of the Forest do creep forth; the Sun ariseth, they gather themselves together, and lay them down in their Dens: Man goeth forth to his Work, and to his Labour until the evening.* O Lord how manifold are thy Works? in Wis-

dom hast thou made them all. The Glory of the Sun is also well expressed by the Psalmist, which is *as a Bridegroom coming out of his Chamber; rejoiceth as a strong Man to run a Race; his going out is from the End of the Heaven, and his Circuit unto the Ends of it, and there is nothing hid from the Heat thereof.*

The Wisdom of God is also seen in the usefulness of the Moon, which was appointed to rule over the Night, and to give a faint Light, for those that might have necessity to travel in the Night: but God having ordained the Night for Man to rest in, he has not given the Light of the Moon to be so constant as the Light of Sun; and therefore it doth not derogate from his Wisdom and Goodness, that he did not make more Moons by which there might always have been Light in the Night; and besides the brightest Glory and Majesty of God, is in this visible World the starry Heaven, which in number and variety of the Stars exceed the comprehension of Men and Angels, they are the Lamps and Flame-beaus making some resemblance of the Magnificence of the Palace of the King of Glory, and yet they are no more than the Ornaments of his Outter-Court, or the enamelling of the Pavement of his Inner-Court, the third Heaven or the Heaven of Heavens. When God doth most favourably condescend to *Abraham*, he bids him look unto the starry Sky, and asks if he could number them, and doth the like with *Job*, when he was first to humble him for his boldness, and then to exalt him for his faithfulness. The starry Heaven is never so glorious as when neither Sun nor Moon doth appear, therefore it was fit that the Light of the Moon should have Intervals.

Little

Little is known of the Influence of the Stars, tho many Astrologers make unsolid and unwarrantable Conclusions, on pretence of their Experience. It is true God said to Job, *Knowest thou the Ordinance of Heaven, canst thou set the Dominions thereof in the Earth, canst thou bind the Influences of Pleiades, or loose the Bonds of Orion?* Which imports a great Influence of the Stars upon the Earth; but the Astrologers infer most from the Planets and their Aspects, which are opaque and unactive Bodies: doubtless the Sun and Moon have great Influence on the Earth, not only by their Light and Heat, but that correspondence betwixt the Tides of the Sea; and the Course of the Moon giveth strong ground to infer that the Moon hath much Influence thereon. I cannot certainly know whether the sweet Influence of the *Pleiades* doth import any more than that when the Sun is under the *Pleiades* or seven Stars, the Spring is in its Prime, when all things revive, and it is called the Time of Life; or whether the Bonds of *Orion* being near to the North Pole, implieth more than the Rigour of Cold and Frost, when the Sun is nearest them, and farthest Northward.

God in his Wisdom hath said little of the dark Planets, *Saturn*, *Jupiter* and *Mars*, *Venus* and *Mercury*, but hath left them to Man's Exercise and Industry, who hath found by their Eclipses, that they have no Light of their own, but do only reflect the Light of the Sun, as doth the Moon: and tho of old they were thought to be wandring Stars, yet now their regular and certain Courses are found and known; and more little Planets moving about *Saturn* and *Jupiter*, since the Invention of Telescopes, whereby their Courses are also known

and calculated, and the Usefulness thereof, for finding out the Longitude, is known, which is of so great Use for Navigation, and it is very probable that more will yet be found.

The Comets or blazing Stars, are yet looked upon as prodigious or irregular; yet it is not without Hope, that their regular Course may be also found.

The Eclipses of the Sun and Moon gave great Astonishment and Terror at first to all, and still to the less knowing Nations; but they give still Matter of Admiration, and incite us to consider the wonderful Works of God: Their Recourses are now certainly known and calculated for many Years to come; for the Predictions of these that have past, have always held, since the Course of the Planets have been exactly known, from whence the Eclipses do necessarily follow. The Eclipses have also great Use for the Calculation of Time; for in divers Nations, and at divers Times, the Periods from which they begin their Calculations are different, and the Length of their Years, the Equation and Conciliation whereof have been very difficult, but much helped by the Eclipses observed by Astronomers in several Ages, which being sure, the Priority or Posteriority of great Occurrences are thereby adjusted.

So far hath God expressed of the Creation of things inanimate, being all visible and obvious to Man at the first, without expressing any thing, specially concerning the five dark Planets, or the little Planets which move about them, neither of the variety of these things which were contained in the Bowels of the Earth, as Stones, Minerals and Metals; neither is there any thing revealed concerning

cerning that variety of Motions that are in inanimate Creatures, such as the circular Motion of the *Æther*, and therewith of the Sun, Moon and Stars, which do so exactly keep their Course, nor of the Motion of Fire, nor Weight nor Lightness, whereby things move downward to and upward from the Earth, nor the peculiar Virtues and Efficacies of the Stars, of the Elements, and their Concretes, of Plants, Stones, Minerals, Metals, or of the Causes thereof: all which in the Wisdom and Goodness of God were reserved for the Exercise and Industry of Man, whom God would not have idle, tho he had continued in Innocency; for he put innocent *Adam* in the Paradise to dress it. Much of the stupendous and unsearchable Wisdom of God hath been in every Generation discovered since the beginning of the World, and thence great Profit and Pleasure have arisen to Mankind, and matter of Admiration and Adoration of the inscrutable Wisdom and Goodness of God, who hath also given Man a great Pleasure in the search of all hidden things, and of the Causes of these which appear, and a great Delight in them when they are found out, above all other to the Inventers, for their Encouragement, and as a Reward of their Industry. For instance, How great Profit and Pleasure hath arisen to Mankind by the Invention of Writing? God infused in our first Parents the Knowledg of Speaking, whereby without their own Invention or Agreement, they did express their Thoughts and Things: But we have no ground to infer that he taught them writing, that not only by the Ear, but by the Eye, they could communicate Thoughts and Things, not only to those who were present
and

and near them, but to the absent, whereby Men spoke after their Death to many Generations, and their more noble Conceptions and Inventions have been collected, and continued and communicated through the World for many thousands of Years. By Writing we have preserved and propagated that infinite Treasure of Wisdom and Righteousness, the Holy Scriptures. How great Addition to Writing hath been by the recent Invention of Printing?

How much Profit and Pleasure hath arisen to Mankind by the Invention of Glass, and how strange Improvements have been made of it? Before Men could not have the access of Light unto their Houses but by open Windows, which behoved also to give access to Moisture and Cold: What variety of Vessels of Glass containing and conserving all Liquors without Effusion or Evaporation, and without any Tincture, so pleasantly, that they are seen, as if they were pendent in the open Air? God hath blessed these last Times with new and strange Inventions of Glass: for whereas before old People lost the benefit of Writing and Printing, and of the distinct sight of minute Objects, whereby they were exceedingly hindered to communicate their Thoughts in that Age when they were most fit to do it by their long Experience, by the allaying of their Passions, by the increases of their Graces and Vertues: Yea by Magnifying Glasses in this searching Century, there is a whole new World discovered of innumerable Creatures which were never so much as dream'd of, or imagined before: By Microscopes, whereby the Parts, Shapes and Colours of the little Animals, Plants and Seeds which were seen before; but these
Shapes

Shapes and Colours were unperceivable by the sharpest Eye. Now the wonderful Wisdom of God is seen in the Beauty and Variety of both the Vessels and Conduits in Plants and Animals, which were known to be necessary from their Effects, are now distinctly and clearly seen by the Eye, whence the Anatomick Skill is so much improved in this Century. By Telescopes the Sun, the Moon, the Planets, the Comets, the Stars and their several and variable Parts are so distinctly seen, as if they were near the Ends of these Tubes: Whereby Men have made a Selenography of the Moon like to the Geography of the Earth, and have observed fixed Signatures and Varieties in *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Mars*, *Venus* and *Mercury*, and more lasting Spots in the Sun, whereby they clearly see that all of them are turned about their own Centers, and have calculated their exact Revolutions. They have also found four little Planets which move about *Jupiter*, as the *Moon* doth about the *Earth*, and make variety of little Eclipses; they have also found the Periods of their several Revolutions, and that the nearer they are the sooner are their Revolutions perfected; and two such about *Saturn* with a Belt or Ring, which makes a continual Variety in the view of that Planet: thence there are few but great Bodies discovered, and there is no doubt there will be many more; but by the Microscopes there are innumerable Kinds as well as Individuals of Animals, Plants and Seeds discovered, of which neither whole nor part was ever known before.

I shall but add the Invention of Trigonometry, by Quadrants, Astronomers Cross-staffs and other Instruments, and even by the Shadow, the exact
Distance

Distance and Dimensions of Bodies, the Height, the Breadth, the Length, the Depth of Bodies are exactly measured at distance, and all by the Proportions of a large and little Triangle, whose Angles are homologous, that is, intercept equal Degrees of a Circle whose Center is in their Angles, whereby there is the same Proportion of Length between the Sides and Basis of any of the Angles of the little Triangle, and between the Sides and Basis of the Angles of the large Triangle about the Angles of the same Capacity and Wideness.

It might multiply many more such, but I shall content my self with the mention of the Loadstone, its attractive and directive Motions not long since discovered: by the directive Motions of that Stone, whereby it is always turned towards the North and South Poles, Men are enabled to direct their Course by Navigation through the vast Ocean to any Coast of the Earth. Navigation before was but Coasting, no Man durst enter upon the vast Ocean, tho some without their Intention were forced by Storms and Winds whither they would not, and so fell upon undiscovered Countries. But now by the Mariner's Compass or Needle Commerce is so increased, that all things are communicated from place to place through the whole Earth, that if it were not for their Perversness the whole Race of Mankind might become one great Common-wealth, God having given an inbred Principle to Mankind, to prefer the common Interest of the whole to that of any part.

On the fifth Day God perfected the Creation of inanimate Creatures, by an orderly Procedure, according to the degrees of their Perfections:

1. The Chaos, which, before it had Figure or Motion,

tion, was the most imperfect Substance. 2. Adding Perfections to that part of the Chaos, he made Fire to give Light and Heat by its Motion. 3. Giving an uniform circular Motion to those Particles of the Chaos that made up the Spheres of Æther, by whose Revolution the Vicissitudes of Day and Night began. 4. Adding Cohesion of Parts of the Chaos about the Earth; whence arose the Figures of the Particles of Water, which at first covered the whole Face of the Earth, being then exactly round. 5. Separating the Earth and the Water by making the Mountains and Vallies; the Earth having been also made of the Chaos, by Cohesion of its Parts, whereby a far more variable Figure of its Particles arose, in which were comprehended Metals, Minerals, Stones, saline and sulphurous Bodies, the Seeds of Plants, and the Terrestrial Fire. 6. The Plants are formed, whether they sprung of these Seeds by the immediate creative Power of God, or whether beside the Seeds, the Plants were formed fit to receive them, it is uncertain; it might appear rather that they sprung of the Seeds, because it is said, *Let the Earth bring forth*, &c. yet that may be understood of the subsequent Growth of Plants. And last, the Stars were created, being the most perfect and glorious of all inanimate Creatures: Then followed the Creation of living Creatures in the same order, proceeding from the least perfect Kinds to the more perfect, until the last Termination in the Creation of Man. The other living Creatures are stated in three Orders, the Fish in the Waters, the Fowl to fly in the Air, and the Beasts on the Earth; all which have their variable Motions, which some imagine to be without Per-

Perception or Sense, and that they be only passive in their Motions from the Impression of outward Objects, for which I see no solid Reason; for they having Senses so like unto Men, if all their Motions were by Impressions on their Senses, it could not be doubted but such Motions would be also in Men, (seeing their Senses are operative without their Will, or any intrinsick active Power) which is contrary to the common Sense and Experience of all Mankind. However it be, there is great Evidence of the wonderful Contrivance of the Wisdom of God in brute Creatures, especially in the peculiar Instincts of the several Species, which do all act necessarily upon their proper Objects, without Hesitation or Deliberation. They have their Pleasures and Grievs, their Appetites and Aversions, in which they cannot divert from one Object to another, nor can they compare Objects, Means or Ends; and yet by the wonderful Wisdom of God, they do most things necessary for their Preservation, their Promotion and Propagation, by meer Instincts, more exactly than Men can in the same things that are common to both. Besides the wonderful and various Structure of their Bodies, there are Depths concerning them that the most knowing Men have never been able to reach, as what their Souls are, how they are produced, how their Bodies are framed by Generation; wherein certainly there is a difference from the Generation of Men. God doth not command the Earth to bring forth Man, as he doth to bring forth the brute Creatures, therefore it seems their Seeds were created in the Beginning as well as the Seeds of the Plants. Some late Experiments by Microscopes have shown an infinite number of *Animal-
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tula in the Sperme of the Brutes, but their Souls are not endued with that Perfection to have any Perception but by the Impression of Objects; so their Bodies being marred, their Souls can never more have any Animal Operation, as the separate Souls of Men have.

The first and lowest Degree of Animals is of Fish, which live in the Water, whereof there are innumerable kinds and degrees of Perfection, from the Oister (that hath no other Motion but the opening its Shell to receive its Aliment) to the Whale. This also is strange in Fishes, that Concourse of the Seeds of Male and Female do but in few of them appear, nor have they that Pairing which the Fowls and other Brutes have when left to their natural Course, nor any Knowledg of, or Affection to their Birth. The more perfect Fish are furnished with Instruments for their Progress, especially with Fins.

The next Degree in Perfection of Brutes, are the Fowls, who are adorned with their beautiful Feathers, and instructed with their Wings by which they fly. Their several Kinds have their distinct Voices, by which they express their Affections; the variety of which, and of their Shapes and Colours, and their Instincts, by which they know their Food and Physick, and what is hurtful to them, and the melodious Songs of many of them, do all manifest the wonderful Wisdom of their Creator.

The Water is impowered and commanded to bring forth both Fish and Fowl, which doth import that their Seeds are lubrick and not firm, as that of Plants, and therefore are dispersed in that soluble Element.

On the sixth Day were created the Terrestrial Beasts; for God said, *Let the Earth bring forth the living Creatures after his kind*, which are three, beside the various Species of every Kind, to wit Cattel, creeping Things on the Earth, and the Beasts; these seem to be the wild and ravenous Beasts that live not in Herds or Flocks, which are the Cattel, but both walk with Legs, and so are different from the creeping Things, as Worms and Serpents. I shall not need to speak any thing of the Variety of these, and of the Wisdom of God shining in them, seeing they differ not much from what has been said of the Fish and the Fowls, but that they come nearer to the Perfection of Man than they.

God hath given eminent Instances of his Wisdom in the Perfections of the Horse, and the Leviathan, whose Scales do clearly distinguish it from the Whale, so that it is a Terrestrial Animal, and in the Unicorn.

All the Creation, tho it be very wonderful, holds a small Proportion with the Wisdom of God, in the creating and governing of Man, which is incomprehensible. Some part of it will appear in the Dominion of God, which I shall leave to the next Meditation, and only remark upon the whole Creation, that wonderful Beauty of all its Parts, their Correspondence and mutual Usefulness, and the Termination of all their Perfections on Mankind.

MEDITAT. XVIII.

Upon the Dominion of God, and his Dispensations thereupon towards his Rational Creatures, especially by the Covenant of Works and Covenant of Grace.

I Have as distinctly and orderly as I could, cleared and quieted my Thoughts concerning the Divine Perfections, Natural and Moral, severally: I come now to consider them jointly in the glorious and gracious Dominion of God over the World, in which all his Perfections are displayed and manifested. It is Omniscience and infinite Wisdom in the Contrivance of the World, and of all that was to occur in it unto Eternity: His Omnipotence in bringing all his Purposes to pass: His Goodness, that all he did and was to do is very good, and nothing he made is without some Perfection for it self, and Usefulness for some other Creature; and that even from the evil Actions of Men he taketh occasion to increase the Exercise of his Goodness, Bounty and Mercy. His Justice, Truth and Faithfulness are exercised upon all his Rational Creatures, who only are capable of them; and his most eminent Goodness in that Resemblance he gave them of his own Perfections, and in those Principles wherewith he hath endued them;

them, beside his Image, congruous to their Natures, but not perfectly correspondent to his own, to whom none of his Creatures can be like, but with infinite Unlikeness: Yet with that real (tho imperfect) Likeness of him his Reasonable Creatures were originally formed, whereby he made them all capable of Blessedness, and by Resemblance thereof to conceive Thoughts of his own Blessedness, in being the only pure Spirit, self-existent, everlasting, self-sufficient, independent, free, unchangeable in all his Perfections, Purposes and Performance of them, fully delighting in himself, and thereby infinitely blessed.

The Dominion of God comprehends his Dominion of Property, and his Dominion of Sovereignty. By the former he is Lord of all his Creatures, by the latter he is Sovereign Ruler of all his Rational Creatures, and so is King, Law-giver and Ruler of the whole World. There is a clear and known difference between Dominion of Things, and a Dominion over Persons. The Dominion of Things is a Right and Power to dispose of them at Pleasure without any Restraint: This Right is founded in their Creation and Preservation; for he that gave Being, and that freely, might give it with what Perfections he pleased, and might at full Arbitrament annihilate or alter whatever he gave; and in that Consideration even his Rational Creatures are part of his Property, more at his disposal than the Clay is at the disposal of the Potter, who can but mould and varnish his Clay, and may mar it at his Pleasure, but could neither give it its Being and Capacities, nor can take them from it. In this Relation there can be no Obligation or Debt from God to any Creature;

ture; and it is by this Dominion that he hath stated all his Rational Creatures in their different Degrees, not only of the Kinds but of the Individuals. No other account ought to be inquired of the different degrees of Knowledge, Wisdom, Power, Beauty, Health, Dexterity, Length of Days, Riches, Pleasure or Honour: tho these may be used as Means of Justice, Truth, Faithfulness and Mercy, and as the Means of Government, yet may they be absolutely without respect to these, and it can hardly be discerned when they are otherwise; and therefore in them all things befall alike to all, and no Man can judge Love or Hatred of God from any thing that is so before him.

Some Men have thought they magnified God, by magnifying this as the only Dominion of God, and that there is no other distinct Dominion of Persons, which would altogether make void the Justice, Truth and Faithfulness of God, which are no less essential to God, and much more glorious than his Right of Disposal, or Property. A Proprietor in making use of his Goods doth not govern them, no not in the ordering of his Beasts; but where-ever Government is, there must be Law, Liberty, Rewards and Punishments: by the Government of Persons only can there be a Kingdom. He that had the Property of a whole Country could be Lord of it, tho there were not a Man on it but himself, but he could not be King of it. God takes to himself the Title of King in a more proper Sense, and it is so acknowledged by all his holy Creatures: He is called the King of the whole Earth, of all the World; *The Lord has prepared his Throne in the Heavens, and his Kingdom ruleth over all. He is the Prince of the Kings*

of the Earth, they are but his Deputies and Vicegerents; Yea the greatest of them are but as Grasshoppers in his Sight: The Scepter of his Kingdom is a Scepter of Righteousness; he sits on a Throne of Holiness, he is a great King and he is King of Glory, his Kingdom is an everlasting Kingdom, of his Dominion there is no End: Yea he is the only Potentate, He doth what he will in Heaven and in Earth, and who can say, what dost thou? David at the Dedication of the Temple, saith to God, *Thine, O Lord, is the Greatness, and the Power, and the Glory, and the Victory, and the Majesty: Thine is the Kingdom O God, and thou art exalted as Head above all.* And Jeremiah saith, *Who would not fear thee, O King of Nations? For to thee doth it appertain.* The Psalmist saith, *The Lord is a great King above all Gods: The Sea is his, and he made it.* The Sea is mentioned as his Property only, because the vast Ocean is capable of no humane Dominion. None can, or ever did claim a local Sovereignty over the whole Sea, nor a Property in it. The Psalmist saith, *The Heavens are thine, the Earth also is thine; as for the World and Fulness thereof, thou hast founded them.* For his Pleasure all things are and were created. Is there any other Sovereign can pretend these Titles? He rules in the Kingdom of Men, and gives it to whomsoever he will, even unto the vilest of Men, who can neither pretend worth nor deserving.

If then Gods's Dominion over Persons be not arbitrary, as over things, what impudent Presumption must it be for Creatures tho they were Angels, much more for Men of like Infirmities with others, and of more impetuous Passions, to give no other reason for their Commands, than Such is our Pleasure?

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There are three common innate Principles written in the Heart of Man, the Love of God, the Love of Mankind, and Self-love, which in their due Subordination, and in their proper Limits are all Good: as Christ hath said, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Mind, with all thy Strength, and thy Neighbour as thy Self.* These are the chief Means of the Divine Government, by which Mankind might be happy in all Conditions, Stations and Relations; as Men, as Married, as Parents or Children, as Masters and Servants, as Sovereigns and Subjects, as Fellow-Citizens, as Neighbours and Friends; who have all their special Principles and Rules, by Reason and Revelation, which when they forsake, and follow the swing of their own Lusts and Passions, God in his Justice might give them up to their own Counsels, to follow their own Ways, and oftentimes doth so, as he declares by his Word, as to their eternal Interest: yet so great is his Goodness as he doth rarely utterly abandon them, but as to their outward Condition in this present Life, he continues to overrule them, by his Providence, in all these Relations; for in some Measure, he is good to all in this Life.

The Providence of God useth to be handled apart by Divines, as it doth not only comprehend his Dominion and Government of his rational Creatures, but his Wisdom and Goodness in his Preservation, Provision and Direction of every Creature towards the End which he designed. I have chosen rather to consider the Wisdom and Dominion of God apart, as being thereby the more able to apprehend them distinctly and clearly.

The Dominion of God reacheth unto all his rational Creatures, even unto the damned Spirits, not only as they are Executioners of his Justice against Men, as he sends them out, wherein tho their End be always wicked, the Act it self is ever just and good ; so an evil Spirit from the Lord vexed King Saul, when he had forsaken the Rules of his Government : but these Spirits are only permitted while they tempt to Acts which no Intention can make good, or indifferent ; but most of all, God doth overrule these Spirits by restraining their Malice from tempting or troubling Men, and even in the Permission of their Temptations, he puts no Man under an inevitable Necessity of being overcome, but those that voluntarily or habitually have rendered themselves weak, whether by positive Choice, or by Neglect and Inadvertence. It is a needless Curiosity to enquire how God doth overrule damned Spirits, who are scarce capable of farther Punishments, being already condemned, and in a continual Torment of Mind, nor can they expect Rewards : It would be no Punishment to them to annihilate them, yet they have some Diversion by compassing the Earth, going to and fro therein, and endeavouring to bring Men unto the like Condition with themselves ; and they are still capable of greater Torment, and therefore they tremble.

Men are much more governable in this Life, being far more passable than Spirits, and being seldom in absolute Despair, but ever capable of Rewards and Punishments ; and the greater they are, the more are they capable. Single Persons that have no near Relations, are far less liable to Shame or Suffering than the Masters of Families, or Rulers

lers of States ; and the Noble, than the Ignoble, who are liable to Shame, Affront and Disgrace, which they regard more than their Lives.

There are three sorts of Men, the Godly, the Honest, and the Prophane ; the Godly are governed by the Love of God, which is the Principle of true Piety and Religion, reaching not only to Divine Worship, but even to the Acts of Honesty and their own Happiness. In all which the chief Reason and Motive is the Love of God, whereby they determine themselves in every thing towards his Glory and Pleasure. These are governed by eternal Rewards and Punishments after this Life, and by internal Rewards in the Peace of a good Conscience, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and internal Punishments in the Doubts and Disquiets of their Souls, beside the other ways of Rewards and Punishments common to the rest.

Those that are only Honest, are governed by the Love to Mankind, which for that very End God hath placed in the Nature of Man, whereby till they be depraved, they are inclinable in every Case to do that, which if it were done by all Men, they would live happily: And therefore the Wicked are ashamed to profess that in things in their Power, they would prefer the Interest of a single Person to the Interest of their Family, or the Interest of a Family to the Interest of a Nation, or any of these Interests to the common Interest of Mankind. Those that are prophane and wicked, God overrules even by their Self-love ; for tho they would subordinate all things to their Self-interest, if securely they could, and when with probability they can, yet supposing others to be of the same Inclination, their own Interest obligeth
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them to profess, if not Piety in Hypocrisy, at least common Honesty, wherein God's Wisdom and Goodness is eminently seen; for otherwise most Men would be as malicious and openly wicked as the damned Spirits.

God hath Rewards and Punishments sufficient and suited to the Condition of all Men, tho their Rewards be not by exact Justice: Prosperity and Peace are the common Encouragements to Good. Trouble and Affliction are the common outward Punishments, and more particularly Disquiet and Anguish of Spirit, when the special Cause thereof is not known. These are dispensed to particular Persons, but the Punishments of Societies use not to be inflicted, but upon atrocious, common and avowed Vices, for which God sendeth common Calamities, as Plague, Famine, Inundation, Sterility, Shipwrack; and the Destruction by ravenous Beasts, which was more frequent when the World was less planted. The Scripture doth frequently mention God's four sore Judgments. God exciteth War, about which there is no doubt, when it is for just Causes, and overrules it when upon unjust, but rather uses the other Plagues.

God exercises his Dominion partly by the Law of Nature written in Man's Heart, partly by Divine Institutions revealed to Men. By the Law of Nature is the Government of Parents over their Children, by the natural Affection of the Parents to the Children, whereby they take Pleasure to preserve, direct, and provide for them; and by the natural Affection of the Children to reverence and obey their Parents: which Affections arise in both from their belief of these Relations, even where they are mistaken; and by the Law of Nature the Contracts and Passions

ons of Parties to govern and to obey, as between Masters and Servants, between Rulers and Subjects: for the Force of these Pactions, is by the Law written in Man's Heart, by which his Conscience convinces him that he is obliged to perform.

God exerciseth his Dominion not only by the Laws of Nature, but by positive Laws and Institutions, which are not known by the Light of Nature, but by Revelation; such is the Government of the Husband over the Wife, by the Divine Institution of Marriage, and the Government of Common Wealths, by God's Institution of a publick Judgment, to order and determine all Controversies, concerning such as should unite themselves in Civil Societies. The former was propagated by an universal Tradition to all Nations, from *Adam* till the Flood, and from *Noah* and his Posterity after the Flood: But Civil Government was only instituted after the Flood, when Mens Lives became short, God allowed the Fathers of Families to unite themselves and their Families into Civil Societies, and to transmit the Power and Burden of the Government of their Families in most things upon the Governours of those Societies: So that tho there be mutual Pactions in Marriage and Government, yet the Essentials of both are by Divine Institution, which cannot lawfully be altered. Persons may choose whether they will marry or not, and with whom, but the Degrees within which they may marry are instituted: The Power of the Husband, and the Indurance and Dissolution of the Marriage are instituted by God, and unalterable by Man; but in other things their Pactions are effectual, as in other Cases: So also in Civil Government, the Form of Government,
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the Persons governing, the Extensions of their Power, more than what is requisite for Order and Determination of Controversies, are by the express and tacit Pactions of the Parties, except what God did immediately determine in the Government of *Israel*.

God did also institute a distinct Government for his own Worship, and separated it from the Paternal and Civil Authority, both among the Jews in the Levitical Priesthood, which was propagated by imitation to most other Nations; and among Christians, a Church became a distinct Society from a State, and hath its proper Ecclesiastick Government, tho both Societies may concur in the same Persons. The Civil Government is for the outward State of their Society, and the Means of their Government is outward, by extrinick Rewards and forcible Punishments. The Ecclesiastick Government is about the inward State of those of their Society, in so far as Man's Knowledge can reach, to promote Holiness, and internal and eternal Happiness, and about their outward Acts only, as they signify their inward Condition; and their Rewards and Punishments are only by application of the Divine Ordinances, in exciting Joy or Grief, Fear or Hope, as is conducive for the inward State, but without temporal Rewards, and forcible Punishments.

But there is yet a more inward and secret Dominion of God, exercised by the Conscience, which is his Deputy, by which he distributes the most powerful and important Rewards and Punishments, not only in this Life, but chiefly after Death.

The most eminent and important Dispensations of God's Dominion is by the Covenants he made with
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with Men, which therefore require a particular Consideration, especially the general Covenants relating to all Mankind.

It was a high Honour put upon Men that God was pleased to enter into mutual Ingagements with them, by way of Covenant, whereby God promised some Favours to them besides those which arose from their Creation, which Favours they could not warrantably believe, nor expect by his Justice, Bounty, Mercy, or even by his Faithfulness, but only by his Promise in these Covenants. And on the other part there was not ground to expect them even from the Promises, unless there were a voluntary Engagement on Man's part by entering into these Covenants. God's Dispensations might have been without any Covenant, either by commanding Men to do that which he proposed to them to do, whereby the not Performance became a Transgression of his Command, and Sin; or he might have made Promises conditional, without requiring Mens Engagements.

I see very many Covenants between God and Man in Scripture, but the purely Celestial and Eternal Covenants are only two, the Covenant of Works, and the Covenant of Grace. The Covenant of Grace is the chief Concern of Mankind, and it runs through the whole Current of Scripture: It was published to our first Parents immediately after their Fall; and tho the Record of it in Scripture at first be no more, but [that the Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent,] I doubt not but it was more fully manifested to, and understood by the first Parents. It was more fully manifested to *Abraham*, to whom it was said, *That in thy Seed shall all the Nations of*
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the Earth be blessed. It was continued in the Church in the Revelation and Expectation of the Messiah, who was to deliver his People from their Sins, and was represented by the Sacrifices instituted by God from the beginning, and by the Sacraments and Ceremonies instituted thereafter, tho the Jews in their latter times were wholly perverted, believing their Messiah to be a Temporal Monarch, to raise their Nation to great Glory; wherein Christ the Messiah himself did fully confute them from the Old Testament, and brought Life and Immortality to light in a clear Discovery of the Covenant of Grace, as it remains recorded in the Gospel.

The Covenant of Works being broken and become void, there is but little of it expressed in Scripture, in which that Name of the Covenant is no where mentioned; and tho it may seem a needless Curiosity to enquire into the Terms of it, I conceive it is not unprofitable, but very useful, to manifest the Glory and Goodness of God in all his Dispensations with Mankind, and for the understanding the Covenant of Grace that came in its place, which will appear by that excellent Parallel of the Apostle *Paul* betwixt the first and second *Adam*.

It hath been the common Opinion of Christians, that there was a Covenant between God and *Adam* upon solid Grounds. It is certainly a great Condescension and Kindness in God to enter into Covenant with Creatures; but seeing it is certain that he hath so often admitted sinful Creatures to covenant with him, there is no ground to doubt that he enter'd into Covenant with innocent *Adam*, which is yet more clear from the Parallel of the
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first and second *Adam*, whereby both are acknowledged to represent and undertake for the whole, or a great part of the Race of Mankind; that through *Adam's* Failure Sin entered in the World, and that Christ had obtained a better Covenant. It is therefore inferred that there was a prior Covenant.

As to the Terms of the first Covenant, it is clear that God promised *Adam* Immortality, seeing the Penalty expressed by *Moses* for the Breach in eating the forbidden Fruit is Death, not only Temporal, by the Separation of the Soul and Body, and the Corruption of the Body, but Eternal, by the Separation from the Favour of God; therefore Life and Immortality is implied, which tho it was possible to have been preserved in *Adam* and his Posterity, by the continuance of *Adam* and his Posterity upon Earth, living an Animal Life; but this Earth could not have sufficed for all the Posterity of *Adam*, if none had died, or been removed; yea Immortality could not have been continued in that State wherein the Body was perpetually wearing with its Food and Exercise, if there had not been extraordinary Means to have preserved or restored it. Therefore I do not conceive that Immortality was competent to innocent Man by his Nature, and was taken from him as his Punishment against his Nature; but that it was only promised to be given as a part of that Covenant, the loss of which was a great Penalty. It is true, the Soul was naturally immortal, and could not cease to exist but by taking away that which was given in its Nature; but it will not follow that Man, the Complex of Soul and Body, was so immortal.

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The Parallel doth also give ground to infer, that it was a part of God's Promise in the first Covenant, that *Adam* and his Posterity should be exalted from an Animal Life on Earth, to an Angelical Life in Heaven, which is evidently a part of the Covenant of Grace, and is frequently expressed by Restitution and Redemption, importing that it belonged to Mankind before, but was lost; and seeing the Preference of the Benefit by the second *Adam* is expressed in the Parallel, if that Exaltation had been wholly new, it would not have been omitted.

The Parallel also imports, that the Promise of Immortality was not only to *Adam*, but to his Posterity.

It could not consist with the Wisdom and Goodness of God, that the first Covenant should have been impracticable, and therefore it must have been a part of God's Promise, that if *Adam* continued faithful for such time as God had appointed for his Trial, that God would confirm him by more powerful and efficacious Grace, as it is commonly believed that he hath confirmed the Elect Angels, that they should never fall, but be happy. I see not how it could be called an happy State, that were still under the fear of being lost.

There is no ground to think, that by the first Covenant *Adam's* Posterity should have been in a better Condition than himself, but that they also should have had a time of Trial as he had, and such as should persevere should also be confirmed; yet there was necessity that they should be endued with more Strength from the Womb, thereby to be put in equal Capacity to stand as he was: For seeing *Adam* was created in the Ripeness of Discretion;

cretion, and in the clear Knowledg of God, and yet so soon fell, upon so small Temptation, it had been impossible for any of his Posterity, being to be born Infants, without any Principle vident in them, but the Pleasure of Sense till they attained to Discretion, and by long Exercise of these sensible Pleasures, strong habitual Pleasures supervening, that any one of them could have persevered, unless God had promised, that if *Adam* had stood out his Trial, he would have given farther Perfection to his Posterity.

This first Covenant between God and *Adam* is commonly called the Covenant of Works, to distinguish it from the Covenant of Grace, and therefore there behoved to be something in it of Merit: And that God's part of that Covenant was not only of Grace or free Favour, but partly by Premiative Justice and Debt, in Remuneration of the Holiness of the Creature, as the Apostle saith, *To him that worketh, the Reward is not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt.* Yet it cannot be thence inferred that the Reward promised by God to *Adam* in his Perseverance, was wholly and only a Reward of Debt by Justice, but that it might be partly a Reward of Debt, and partly a Reward of Grace, freely given and not deserved.

Those who arrogate Salvation by the Merit of their Works fortify themselves in their Error, by holding that Salvation by the Covenant of Works would have been wholly by Merit; and therefore Christ having expiated the Sins of the Elect, their good Works must merit Heaven, which is clearly confuted, seeing God's Dispensations are by Covenant, importing Engagements, which did not arise from the Creatures Interest by Creation, but only

only by God's Promise, which was free by the Freedom of Indifferency.

I am fully perswaded that a great part of God's Promises in the Covenant of Works was by his free Favour, and could not have been claimed by *Adam*, or his Posterity, as due in Justice to their Perseverance: For there was an exceeding great difference between the Value of *Adam's* part, and God's part of that Covenant; *Adam's* part was only Obedience to God. There is nothing mentioned in Scripture, or consequent from the Nature of that Covenant, that God's Promises were for *Adam's* improving and increasing those Moral Perfections God had given him by his Creation; but on the contrary, that which is expressly mentioned, is only forbearance to eat of the forbidden Fruit, which could not be the only Obedience, but likewise the Obedience to all the Moral Law written in his Heart, and also to the positive Law of Marriage instituted in Innocency; yet Innocence in all was Man's part: and Improvement, tho it was no Work of Supererrogation even in him, because he was obliged to love God with all his Might, yet it did deserve and merit by God's Remunerative Justice, but it cannot be pretended that it was a proportionable Remuneration to *Adam's* Innocency, that he should not only become Immortal, and be exalted to Celestial and Eternal Glory, and that he should be confirmed and made free of the hazard of falling; but that also all his Posterity should have additional Perfections created with their Souls, enabling them against the Prepossessions of Youth, to remain innocent, and all as a just Proportion by Premiatiye Justice: no certainly.

The Nature of a Covenant which is a mutual Contract, implieth mutual Prestations to be performed by the Parties Contracters, as the mutual Causes and Conditions of each to other; and that the ingaging to these Performances be voluntary, even tho the Matter engaged were necessary, and have an anterior Obligation, distinct from that Obligation which ariseth by the Contract. For as it is well said by Lawyers, the same thing may be due by several Obligations, and may be exacted by any of them; but the Property of a thing cannot be by more Rights, for none can acquire that which is already his own. Therefore before the Covenant of Works the Man was obliged to a full Observance of God's Commands without any Engagement of his own, because God who gave him his Being, might justly qualify his own Gift at his Pleasure; so he had given Man his Being by Creation, with sufficient Intimation of his Pleasure and Command, by the Laws written in his Heart, none of which did oblige him to enter into a Covenant with his Creator, nor did God command him so to do, but offered it to his free Choice, inducing him thereto by the great Benefits he offered him by it, which he had not Right to, nor any ground of Confidence of it, but through that Covenant.

The Covenant of Works had no Sanction by a Penalty added to it: For the Dissolution of it upon Man's Failure in his part arose from the Nature of all Contracts, whereby if the one Party fail, the other may either urge Performance, or declare himself free. After *Adam's* Fall, Performance became impossible, and he was not punish-
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able by that Covenant, but by the antecedent Divine Law ; neither could Man's Consent or Engagement to be liable to the Punishment of Death have any Effect, because his Life is not in his own Power : Therefore he was only punishable by the antecedent Law of God, which was before any Covenant, and remained the same during the Covenant, and after the Breach of it. The Pain of Death expressed for eating the forbidden Fruit was no part of the Covenant, and it doth appear to have been anterior to the Covenant intimated to Man immediately after his Creation, before *Eve* was created, otherwise *Adam* might have eaten of that Fruit, which doubtless was most pleasant before the Prohibition ; but *Eve's* Creation is related after that Prohibition, and there is no ground to doubt but the Covenant was made both with *Adam* and *Eve*. Death was the due Punishment of the Breach of that Prohibition, tho it had not been expressed ; for the Obedience of a Rational Creature to the Creator is indispensable, not only by the Immutability of the Divine Decree not to dispense, but simply by the nature of the Thing. It could not consist with God's infinite Love to himself, to make a Rational Creature that owed him no Obedience ; and if he could renounce Obedience in one thing, he might in all. But tho the Prohibition had been after the Covenant, yet it was no part of it, nor did God by it restrain his own Freedom to command what he pleased, for which he had given an Ability to perform : For it was a chief Law written in Man's Heart to obey all God's Commands. The Institution of Marriage was also before the Fall, and even

even before the Covenant of Works, and the Breach of it, or any of God's Moral Laws, would have annull'd that Covenant. God did both in Wisdom and Goodness express the Sanction of Death to the eating of that Fruit, as that which Man might be most readily deceived in, the Matter being in it self indifferent, and of small moment, abstract from the Command; and therefore the Devil tempted to break it rather than any other.

God made the Covenant of Works with *Adam*, and when *Adam* had broke that Covenant, and made it ineffectual, God did publish to him the new Covenant of Grace. There is but little of either expressly related by *Moses*, yet doubtless both were largely revealed and made known to *Adam*; and now when the Canon of Scripture is full, the Analogy of Faith may thence sufficiently be collected, both as to the Tenor of the Covenant of Works, and of the Covenant of Grace. It were a vast Task to gather in order all that might be deduced from Scripture concerning these Covenants: But that which I find necessary for my Satisfaction, and for clearing to me the beautiful Representation of the Divine Decrees and Dispensations towards Mankind, by Grace and Glory to the Elect, and just Judgment against the malicious and obstinately wicked, I will digest my Thoughts of both these Covenants between God and *Adam*, that the Parallel may the more clearly appear, by expressing the Terms of both in the Form of a free Offer made by God, and accepted by *Adam* for himself and all his, in the way Covenants used to be entred in, as if God had said to

the Protoplasts; I have made you after my own Image, Innocent and Holy, and have endued you with Understanding, whereby you can judg and reason; and have written my Laws in your Hearts, in the Principles of Knowledg, to which you cannot but give assent, and the Knowledg of necessary Consequences, which you may thence certainly deduce. I have also endued you with Capacities of Pleasure and Grief, whereby upon the Preception of these Objects, which may most concern your Well-being, Pleasure or Grief will result, and from Pleasure Appetite, and from Grief Aversion, and have made the purest and powerfulest Joy to arise from the Perception of my glorious Perfections, and next from these things which conduce to the Well-being of your Kind, and then the Pleasure that is peculiar to every one: All which are good, when kept within their Limits, and in due Order. I have given you that capacity of Freedom, that you need not be under the Power of the Pleasure or Grief arising from perception of any Creature, but that you may avoid or abate them, by the Application of other Objects to your Senses or Mind, by the Pleasure or Grief thence resulting, especially by perceiving and considering my own Perfections, whereby you may govern your selves, and your Choices, Appetites or Aversions, as may be allowed and accepted by me, and as may conduce for my Glory, shewing my Divine Perfections, in creating, preserving and ruling such Creatures; whereby as I have been the first Author, so indispensibly I must be the last End of your Being, to which you must subordinate and direct all your considerate Actions,

Actions, even the desire and endeavour of your own Happiness, that thereby you may be in the fuller capacity to please and glorify me, wherein if you transgress, you must be punished by perpetual Exclusion from my Favour, which neither you nor any Creature can ever be able to expiate and restore you, my Aversion from Sin being infinite, as my self. If you improve the Capacities I have given you, I will also reward you with greater Perfections, as you shall deserve: Your Obedience and Devotion to me, must not be in trivial things, but in such things as require Attention and Diligence, yet such as by these shall still be in your Power, while you remain innocent. By careful Inspection of your own Minds, you may find my Laws written therein; most of them are evident to you without reasoning, and I have endued you with this Principle to know all things that are congruous to, and becoming my glorious Nature, and yours, as you bear my Image, and as is congruous to, and becoming that part of your Nature peculiar to your selves.

I am now pleased to enter with you into a Covenant, by your willing Engagement, in the Terms that I offer you, wherein your part is no more than persevering in your Innocence during that time of Trial which I appoint you, to which you are obliged by your natural Duty to which I propose the Accession of your voluntary Engagement; and my part shall be to put you thenceforth out of hazard ever to offend, or to lose that Happiness that I give you, and to put all your Posterity in the like Condition that now you are in, that each of them that shall continue innocent during his Trial shall be likewise confirmed, and be-

cause they are to be born Infants, carried only by sensible Pleasures before Discretion, which will become habitual and strong, and much more ready to exceed than you who were created in ripeness of Judgment. I will enable them to be in like Capacity to stand as you are, and I will exalt you and them from an animal Life on Earth, to an Angelical Life in Heaven, so that you shall be Immortal, without any Separation of your Souls and Bodies. I will put you in no Necessity to fall by my Decree, or any Circumstances in which you shall be placed; I will now add nothing to your Obedience by the Laws of your Nature, but the Forbearance to eat of the Fruit of one Tree in the midst of the Paradise, that it may be an Evidence of your Obedience for my Command alone, in a Thing in it self indifferent, wherein you must take heed that you yield not to the Pleasure which will arise from that Fruit. Are you now content to enter into this Covenant for your selves and your Posterity, wherein if you fail on your Part, you lose all the Benefit of it? To which *Adam* and *Eve* with Joy, Acclamation and Blessing, did engage and assent; and God exhorted them to take good and diligent heed to keep all his Goodness and all his Perfections ever in remembrance, lest they should be perverted by Satan, Self-love, and Sensual Pleasure.

The Terms of the Covenant of Grace are much more fully represented in the Scripture, than was the Covenant of Works. The Covenant of Grace was first published to *Adam* and *Eve* after their Fall, in these Words; *The Seed of the Woman shall bruise the Head of the Serpent*: Where by the Serpent is understood Satan, who under the appearance

rance of a Serpent, deluded them; and by the Seed of the Woman is meant the Mediator of the Covenant of Grace, who is to bruise that Serpent's Head, and to deliver from the Power thereof, such as should obtain the Benefit of the Covenant of Grace; which for my more distinct understanding, I do conceive as if it had been more fully expressed, and as if God after the Fall had said to our first Parents thus.

I made a Covenant with you, for your selves and your Posterity, that if you continued innocent during the time of your Trial, I would have given you supernatural Grace, whereby you should never sin, but should be eternally Happy: I gave you sufficient natural Capacity to fulfil that Covenant, but you have distrusted my Kindness, and have believed an Apostate Spirit, and therefore have lost to your selves and your Posterity, the Benefit of that Covenant, without being in any necessity to break it; by my Decrees or Dispensations, I might justly cut you off without having any Posterity, or might leave you and them to follow your own ways: and I will no more make a Covenant with you for them, but I will raise up a second *Adam*, who shall take upon him your Nature, and be like you in all things (Sin only excepted) who will be for ever Innocent and Holy, and so not only perform that which by the former Covenant you might have performed, but will submit himself to Sufferings for you and your Posterity, of greater value than if you had all suffered eternally the just Reward of your Sins. And for his Sake I do offer you, and will offer to all your Posterity who shall be capable to know an offer of Mercy and Grace, that I will make you new Creatures, endu-

ing you with supernatural Powers and Inclinations, making you Holy and Happy, and will not suffer you to continue in Sin, if you be not so addicted to your Sins, as to reject my Offer to make you Holy; and therefore I will continue with you and your Posterity the Light and Law of Nature written in your Hearts, whereby you may know Sin the Transgression of it, and that you may know that there is Mercy for the Penitent, and none for the malicious while obstinate Sinner; whereby you may also know that if you repent and be-trust your selves to my Mercy and Conduct, that I will make you Holy and Happy: And albeit neither you have, nor will they have Ability to repent and trust; yet with the Offer I will give Strength to perform these Acts, if the Offer be not rejected, and will bring them to the Means of Grace to follow out the same. This Offer becomes a Covenant by acceptance thereof, the Accepters be-trusting themselves to God's Grace and Direction by his Word and Spirit, trusting to obtain Pardon of all Sin, and of Excitation to Repen-tance for obtaining of it, and for obtaining eternal Happiness by infusing the Habits of Grace here, and perfecting them in Glory hereafter, in the be-atifick Visions of God's Perfections, and the shining of his Face for ever, without fear of Sin or falling from that happy State.

I do conceive that in this Representation, all the Requisites of a Covenant are comprehended: For the Difference between a Covenant and any other Favour done or promised, whether absolute or conditional, is no Covenant, albeit there may be therein mutual Prestations required; but this is special in an Offer that it hath no Obligation till it
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be accepted, whereby the Accepters become obliged to perform the mutual Prestations on their Part. God making the general Offer of Mercy and Reconciliation to Sinners if they repent, and betrust themselves to him for all things necessary for their Happiness; for even the natural Conscience of all Men of Discretion is capable to know, and represent to them that God is Just, and will punish obstinate Sinners, and yet is merciful to penitent Sinners, throwing themselves upon him, tho without Revelation they cannot know how a just God can pardon Sin, without Satisfaction to his Justice, but the same is manifested by the Gospel: as by the first *Adam*, all his Posterity were capable of Happiness, if they sinned not; so now by the second *Adam*, all are again capable of Happiness, upon far easier Terms of Repentance and Faith, and even these performed by supernatural Grace.

If *Adam* or his Posterity had the making of the Covenants of Grace, they could not without Impudence make them larger, for there could be no more added, but that even all the obstinately Wicked and Impenitent should enjoy the Pleasure of their Lusts on Earth, and thereafter the Joys of Heaven; so that I do, and all considering Persons might cry out with the Apostle, O the Height, the Breadth, the Length, the Depth of the Love of God! And yet his electing Love is even larger than this Offer: for albeit it be inconsistent with his immaculate Holiness, to make any happy, whom he doth not first make holy; yet some Rejecters he maketh holy and happy, pulling them as Firebrands out of the Fire, which maketh none of the obstinate and rejecting Sinners excusable who continue to refuse to be made holy; and tho they
may

may deceive themselves, thinking they would be willing to be holy, yet while they are addicted to their Sins, in reality their Will is not to quit them.

In my most serious Thoughts, I can perceive nothing in this Conception of God's Covenants with Men, that is impossible, inconsistent with, or incongruous to any of the Divine Perfections; but highly illustrating them all, and becoming the Majesty and Glory of God, as the King and Ruler of his rational Creatures, as to their eternal State. Thereby he shews himself to be the most excellent King, not only in a just Distribution of Rewards and Punishments, but in great Goodness providing all things requisite that might have made them all happy, without making any one miserable, but by their own particular Fault. Thereby also his great Wisdom is manifested, designing, or doing nothing in vain, but ever choosing fit Means for the best Ends; whereby his Mercy doth eminently appear, that even against Merit he gives Grace and Glory to those Creatures of whom he had no need, and who had willingly and ungratefully offended and injured him, that he hath left nothing undone, that could consist with his Dominion, his Wisdom, his Purity and Holiness, to extend his Goodness to his rational Creatures. He doth not only govern the Elect towards their Happiness, after their Conversion, but even before it; he waits upon their Repentance, and gives time to repent to those that do never make use of it. He gives them his Vicegerents to rule them in Civil States, he provides Necessaries for their convenient living in that State; he does not punish these Societies but for gross, common and national Sins, which by the ordinary Power of Nature they might

might forbear, and which are atrociously odious by the very Light of Nature to all but these, the Gratification of whose evil Affections perverts them to think them pleasant. So that none of his Creatures ever had, or ever shall have reason to complain of his Dispensations, but he hath just reason to complain against every lost Sinner that they have hardned their own Hearts from his Fear. Could there be a greater Evidence of the Goodness of God to Mankind, than that after so just and reasonable a Covenant he entered into with them at first, and which they so soon, so unnecessarily, and so ungratefully violated, that he did immediately publish to them the new Covenant of Grace to make all capable of Happiness, through the Incarnation, Suffering and Satisfaction of his Son, and even pulling some as Firebrands out of the Fire, when they were raging in their Sin, and rejecting the Offers of Grace, and resolutely cleaving to their Abominations, and saying in their Hearts, that they would have none of him?

In this way the Errors and Mistakes of Men about the Divine Dispensations may be prevented or cured. As,

1. It was the first, and is yet the most general Error, Why did God suffer Sin to enter into the World? Might he not have made all his Rational Creatures to be infallible? that had been more Goodness than what appears in either Covenant. This was the Devil's Temptation, murmuring that God had made them fallible, and under the necessity of a diligent Attention and Guard, giving them Trouble. Satan did deceive Man, representing God as envious, hindering the Happiness he might attain by eating the forbidden Fruit.

But

But let it be remembered, that God was free to give what measure of Goodness he pleased: it is impossible that he should communicate so much Perfection to Creatures that they were not capable of more, for then his Goodness should be exhausted. Christ said to the Labourers of the Vineyard who murmured, That he had given as much to him that served but one Hour, as to them that had endured the Heat of the Day: *Is it not free for me to dispose of my own as I please?* If God had created his Rational Creatures that they could not shun Sin and Misery by irresistible Temptations, or by an operative Decree, they might have complained; but when they might be happy and would not, what Impudence is it to complain? But likewise as God is bountiful, so he is wise, and will not divest himself of the Government of the World, or manage Men by Instincts, as he doth the Brutes; therefore his Wisdom did require that his Rational Creatures should be capable of Rewards and Punishments, and be governed by them and not by fatal Necessity.

2. The Voluptuous think, Why did God give us Pleasure in such Objects, which results from them so powerfully, that we are not Masters of them? *Eve* insinuated this, that the forbidden Fruit was pleasant, good to eat, and fit to make the Eater wise. Thence also wicked Men do deceive themselves, that these Pleasures to which they have so strong a Propension, cannot be evil, at least the cause of eternal Misery: But they consider not the Goodness of God to Man in giving these Pleasures of Sense; Life and Health may be continued when Smell is lost, and even when Taste is lost, as *Barzillai* said to *David*, If God provided no
Remedy,

Remedy, there might be pretence of Complaint; but tho Pleasure or Grief be not directly in Man's Power, yet God hath endued him with Reason, that he can manage them by applying other Objects to his Sense, or Thought, which will keep them from Excess. If *Eve* upon the Sight or Smell of the forbidden Fruit, and the Pleasure arising from it, and the Desire to it, had remembred God, and the Pleasure arising from the clear Thoughts of him, she had never proceeded to eat. Beside that it was rational and congruous to the Divine Perfections, that the Obedience of his Creatures should require Attention and Diligence, and should not consist in such Trifles as were wholly indifferent, without Pleasure or Pain, Appetite or Aversion.

I conceive they stretch too far that make the first Motions of Pleasure or Appetite thereof to be Sin; Covetousness is the voluntary continuing of these against the Command. Our Saviour had an Aversion from the Cup of his Suffering, and wished it could have been delayed, which was but the Effort of innocent Nature, which he did not voluntarily continue, for immediately he says to the Father, *Not mine, but thy Will be done.* The Heathens and many Christians in their Ignorance, reckon nothing to be Sin but where the evil Inclination takes effect; and the Apostle says, *That without the knowledg of the Law, he knew not that Covetousness was Sin:* which will not infer, that the first Motions of the Affections are Sin, until the Will concur to continue or proceed in these Affections contrary to the Law; for it is said, *When Lust is conceived it bringeth forth Sin.* Where Lust must signify the natural Affection of Pleasure, which

which is not Sin, but the rise of it. The Aversion from Persecution or Martyrdom not yielded to, is not Sin; but it is the greater Duty of Holiness, willingly to undergo it, notwithstanding that natural Aversion: So the first Motion or Desire of the Pleasure of the forbidden Fruit, if it had been immediately avoided by diverting the Mind to God, and Gratitude to him, it had not produced the doleful Effects that followed. These first Motions make many Men doubt of their Regeneration, tho they did not continue in the same in their most secret Thoughts; yet Sin is more in the Will when it doth continue these than in the outward Act, which is rather an Evidence of the strength of the Concupiscence, than a part of the Sin.

The distinct knowledg of the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, has been much perplexed, by apprehending Sin as if it were a Debt obliging the Sinner to Punishment, especially from that, that Sin is called *οφείλημα* in the Lord's Prayer, and elsewhere, which is translated, *Forgive us our Debts, as we forgive our Debtors*: But the Greek Word *οφείλω* doth not only signify *debeo*, but also *obnoxius sum*, I am liable; and so *οφείλημα* signifies not only *debitum*, but *noxa*, that is, Injury or Wrong, and cannot otherways be properly understood in that place; for God hath not required us to discharge the Debts owing to us by our Debtors, but the Resentment of Wrong done to us by them. The Punishment or penal part belongs to God, and so cannot be forgiven by the Person injured; and if there be any thing of Reparation due by the Wrong, it may be lawfully prosecuted: but the Aversion and Resentment arising from the Injury is that which Men are required

quired to forgive and obliterate. There was indeed a Debt of that holy Action that by Sin was transgressed, but every Debt is not a Debt of Payment; for Payment imports the delivery of some Fungible, as Money or Grain, but other Debts consist not in Payment, but in Prestation or performance of some Deed, as the doing any Work, putting one in Possession, giving Honour or Obedience: And so Creatures Obligements to God are not Debts of Payment, but of Prestation or Performance; much less can the Guiltiness of Sin import a Debt of Payment, but it doth not even import a Debt of Performance. A Criminal is not obliged to offer himself to the Justice of the Magistrate, who therein is the Minister of God, no not to confess his Crime when accused by another, unless it can be otherwise proved: Nor doth the Judg punishing take Payment, but useth his Authority in the way of Vindication, as an Act of Punitive Justice done by him on the Criminal, and not done to him by the Criminal. Prestation of Facts being omitted, especially to God, can never be repayed: that which is past cannot be recalled, nor is it compensable by any Liquid Payment, but only the Damage done by it; and if there be no other Damage, the Grief arising by the Injury may be compensated with Joy arising from the Application of some of the Injurer's Goods to the Injured; and oftentimes Men count it a Satisfaction by taking Pleasure in the suffering of the Injurer, but that is it which Men are required to forgive: How can it then be imagined that God requireth Payment for the failure in Duty by the Committer of Sin? He is not capable of Grief or Damage; and he hath not only said, but sworn, that he
taketh

taketh no Pleasure in the Torment of his Creature, *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner.* If Sin inferred a Debt of Payment, it might be forgiven without any Satisfaction; for scarce is any Creditor obliged to exact the Debt due to him, but he may freely forbear it or forgive it. And therefore if Sin did properly infer a Debt, God might forgive it without Satisfaction; therefore God punisheth not Sin as a Creditor exacting his Debt, but as he is the King, Ruler and Judge of the World, he vindicates the Injury against his Law, and manifests his infinite Aversion and Abhorrence of Sin, not his Delight in the Misery of his Creature.

3. I consider the part of the Son in the Decree and Dispensation of the Covenant of Grace, not as a making Payment for the Debt of Sinners, but a submitting to these Sufferings, which do as much manifest God's Abhorrence of Sin, and Delight in his indispensable Law, as if the whole Race of Mankind had been eternally in Hell; and thereby he made way to God's Mercy to fallen Man, so far as it was congruous to the Divine Perfections. If Christ's Satisfaction had been the Payment of the Sinner's Debt, the Forgiveness of Sin would not be by free Grace. A Cautioner or any interposed Person paying a Debt, the Creditor cannot be said to give a free Discharge to the principal Debtor, for he has gotten all he could demand. Law doth not suffer a Creditor to refuse Payment from any that shall please to interpose, which therefore would be far from exalting the free Goodness of God in pardoning Sin, as the Scripture sets it forth; beside that all interposed Persons acquire Right to the Debt, and have Recourse

course against the principal Debtor for whom they pay: But Scripture makes no mention of Sinners becoming Debtors to Christ for Punishment.

If Sin had been undertaken by, and transferred on Christ, the Sinner being so liberated, how could the Sinner beg Pardon of the Sin that was already payed? Thence some have imagined, that it was a fault to mourn for Sin, and that so they were no way under the Law, but under Grace. And those who are a little more modest say, that they do not observe the Law as a Debt by Justice, but as a free Gratification, mistaking grossly that place that the Regenerate are not under the Law, but under Grace; that is, that the Law is no more the Counterpart of the Covenant between God and them, as it was in the Covenant of Works, but is still a Law obliging them to Performance, without Abrogation, Derogation, Indulgence, or Pardon of Sin before it were committed, anterior in its Obligation to any Covenant of and with Man. The reason of the severe Punishment of Sin is commonly given, because it is committed against the infinite Majesty of God; to which I think it may be well added, that as the Aversion of God from Sin, and as his Purity is infinite, so his Justice requires an infinite Punishment, which because a Creature cannot bear in a finite Duration, it becomes an infinite Punishment.

Thence also it is evident that Christ's Satisfaction could not be infinite in Weight, for Weight can no more be infinite than Bulk, but it becomes infinite in Value by the Dignity of the Person that suffered it.

4. All that deserve the Name of Christians do agree, that God's Justice could not be satisfied,

nor Sin expiated, without the suffering of Christ of infinite Value, but they do exceedingly disagree in the Terms of the Covenant betwixt the Father and the Son, and betwixt God and Man. All do agree, that in every Covenant there must be mutual Prestations by either Party; but the Question is, what these Prestations were in the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, what is God's part, and what is Man's part in it? There be many Errors not only perillous, but pernicious, especially when they are wilfully maintained. That Infallibility the Church of *Rome* pretends, makes all her Errors to become wilful and sinful, if once they have been owned in that way they count infallible. All others may and oftentimes do retract their Mistakes. It were highly uncharitable to imagine, that any of these had wilfully or willingly taken up an Error in this matter, which is the greatest Interest of Men; but at first they behoved to be mistaken. I do therefore think it worth my utmost Endeavour, for my own clearing, to consider how they have fallen into these Mistakes, and by what way they might come out of them.

(1.) The *Pelagians* held, That the natural Powers God had given Men by Creation, were sufficient for Regeneration; and that which seems to have led them into that Error was, that it could not consist with the Goodness, and even with the Justice of God, to damn Men for that which was never in their Power to avoid: Seeing nothing can be a Crime but what is voluntary, and where the Will might have actually chosen or followed the contrary, and so at least it was in their natural Power to repent of Sin, and trust in God for

Mercy,

Mercy, through the Merits of Christ. And when they were told that *Adam* was once free, and was the common Root of Mankind, covenanting with God in their Name; and therefore as they would have obtained Happiness if he had stood, so they must be content with Misery seeing he fell. He that takes the benefit of a Bargain, must take it with the hazard of the Loss. The Sins of an habitual Sinner are more atrocious than his first Sins of that kind, and yet less free. It was hard to convince them thus, that they were in the case of Freedom as to Repentance; for while *Adam* did represent Mankind he could not repent, which behoved to presuppose Sin; and after *Adam* had sinned, that Covenant was lost, and no other Sin of *Adam* reached all his Posterity: but if they had considered that Christ the second *Adam* had supplied and exceeded the first *Adam*, whereby no Man should be lost, but he that refused the Covenant of Grace in the first Motions of it, whereby his natural Conscience at least did witness to him that he was a Sinner, and thereby deserved to be excluded from God's Favour, and yet that God was merciful and gracious to a repenting Sinner, but that it could not consist with his Holiness and Purity to reconcile with a Sinner cleaving to his Sin, and that God would never suffer him to perish, who upon such Motions did not cleave to his Sin. It did not thence follow, that this Man by the Power of Nature could repent, but it was sufficient to convince the *Pelagian*, that God would give him a new supernatural Power to repent and believe. All that the *Pelagian* could reply was, that there was no need of a supernatural Power, and therefore the Wisdom of God would not choose a superfluous way,

but would make use of the Powers of Nature. Yet the Scripture saith expressely, and inculcateth, *That the Natural Man cannot understand Spiritual Things*, that are by the Covenant of Grace; for which God gave no Capacity to the first Man by his Creation, and so none of his Posterity can pretend it by those Powers communicated to Mankind by Creation, and Propagation. *Pelagians* did as highly speak of Grace as others, but they meant by it only the Powers of Nature.

(2.) There is a new Mistake like to that of the *Pelagians*, taken up by some of the Protestant Church in *France*, and taketh with others, which if it be followed will end in Pelagianism, but they should not be yet so treated. They do not suppose Repentance and Faith to be in the Power of Man, but that they are given by God at the time of Conversion, yet not by any inward Habit or Power created by God, and infused into the Will or Soul of Man, but by the Word and other Means of God's Providence; as when God by Correction lays low a Man's Passions and Lusts, which hindered him to give due Attention to the Word of God, and then by managing the Word of God, and bringing such parts of it to his Thought as is fitted for his Capacity and Circumstances, so that he cannot resist it; for the Word of God is called the Sword of the Spirit, and that it converts the Soul, and that the various Expressions in Scripture, *Line upon Line*, and *Precept upon Precept*, is contrived to take with several Capacities and Inclinations; and that Man being a Rational Creature, is always acted by God rationally, but infused Habits would be a brute way. The Wisdom of God would take the most adapted way, the holiest

Acts

Acts are done by Acts of Reason and Will, infused Grace would lead to Enthusiasm, and make the Word unnecessary ; but when the Word prevails, it is said to be the ingrafted Word. This they think not to be the moral Swasion of the Arminians wherewith Man could prevail, but no Angel could so manage the Word, it must be the Hand of God alone ; and seeing Conversion can be that way, it were superfluous to add to it other inward Operations of the Spirit. In all this there is nothing but the Powers of Nature more subtilly managed : The whole couſe of Scripture is always inculcating the Difference of Grace from Nature. If the *Pelagians* ſaid not the ſame thing, certainly they might have ſaid it ; but the Scripture ſaith expreſſly, *That the Natural Man cannot know the Things of God, becauſe they are ſpiritually diſcerned.* Therefore Man by Nature wants that Senſe to diſcern with ; Grace is the new Creature, and Regeneration the new Birth, therefore in Regeneration God muſt give a new Senſe. By Nature he hath given five Senſes, and fitted the Objects with ſenſible Qualities ſuted to them all : Theſe were not eſſential to Man, God might have given fewer, or added more, and fitted Qualities for them. May he not then give a new Senſe for ſpiritual Things ? his Word ſheweth he doth ſo, which derogates nothing from the Word, wherein are the Qualities fitted for that Senſe ; it does not derogate from the Excellency of the natural Light, that it cannot work upon a blind Man, or that it does require the Senſe of Sight. The Word of God doth not only excite and promote Grace after Conversion, but is a chief Mean to prepare the way for Conversion, containing

not only supernatural Light by Revelation, but reviving and perfecting natural Light, manifesting the Divine Perfections, the Celestial Glory, the way to attain to it, the Beauty of Holiness, the Deformity of Sin, and the dreadful Consequences thereof; and so looseth the Mind from that cleaving to Sin, that makes the Offer of Grace and Mercy to be despised and rejected: But it is not sufficient to turn the Soul to God by Conversion. A vertuous Heathen by the Light of Nature may see the Deformity of, and may hate gross Vice, and may turn from it to that which is comely and convenient for Mankind, but can never turn to God to make him the last End. The Scripture may much more easily convince, but not convert by it self, but as it hath the Qualities futable to make Impressions upon that supernatural Sense and Relish of spiritual Things. It discovers not only the Pollutions of the World, but those more subtile Sins that Heathens never perceive, such as setting the common Interest of Mankind above the Interest of God, the want of the Love and Delight in God, and of the Dependance upon him, and attributing all good things to him: So the ingrafted Word must be in its proper Stock, in its own spiritual Sense. No Man can refuse that God hath frequently infused Habits in the Soul of Man without the use of any Sense, or any Principle in Reason. Did not God give the knowledg of Words to *Adam* and *Eve* whereby he spoke to them, and they to one another? yet there was no natural Connection between the Sounds of the first Language and the Thoughts and Things they signified. He gave also the Knowledg of many several Languages after *Christ's* Resurrection, not only

only to the Apostles, but to others ; Was either Reason or Will made use of, in the producing of these ? or was it a brute Way, unbeseeming God ? Are not the Principles of reasoning inbred in Nature, and freely given of God ? Is therefore Man's reasoning a brute Way ? Nothing can be more express against this Opinion, than that of *Ezekiel* ; *A new Heart also will I give you, and a new Spirit will I put within you, and I will take away the stony Heart out of your Flesh, and give you a Heart of Flesh ; and I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my Statutes, and you shall keep my Judgments and do them.*

(3.) There is a great Inclination in Man to put Works upon Man's Part of the Covenant of Grace, and that as deserving by Justice the Performance of God's Part. The Semi-Pelagians after the Pelagians were baffled and exploded, that they durst no more profess the Powers of Nature to be sufficient for Salvation, said, there behoved to be supernatural Grace given of God at Conversion, yet there were preparatory Works, such as the Sense of Sin, and of its deserving the Spirit of Bondage, the use of Ordinances, which they thought deserved Grace, which God in Justice could not but give ; these were also exploded, and were called Semi-Pelagians. All the Apostle *Paul's* Arguments against Righteousness by the Law, strike as fully against these as against any Merits or Works on Man's Part in the Covenant of Grace, and he is accurately positive, *That by Faith only we are sav'd*, without any thing on our part in which we might glory, or attribute our Salvation to our selves, in whole, or in part.

(4.) There is of late an Opinion vented in *England*, that tho the Covenant of Works is now be-

come impossible, which required perfect Obedience; yet God in his Goodness hath entered into the new Covenant or Covenant of Grace, in which Man's Part is not a legal and full Obedience, but through Christ's Mediation he hath accepted an Evangelical Obedience, being a sincere Endeavour to fulfil all God's Commandments, and a Course of Life, without continuing in any kind of known Sin. Their main Ground is, that it cannot be thought that God entering with Men in the Covenant of Grace, would not have Men as a Part of their Engagement to resolve and promise to have respect to all God's Commandments, and to endeavour so far as humane Frailty could allow, to fulfil them all: if it were not so that Holiness were Man's Part of the Covenant, we behoved to take the Antinomian's Interpretation, that we were no more under the Law, but under Grace; that the Law had no more Obligation on Believers, therefore the new Obedience must be Man's Part.

This Opinion hath been held by some Pious and otherwise Orthodox Divines, and therefore it ought rather to be cleared as a Mistake, than prosecuted as a stated Profession. It must therefore be adverted, that God's Moral Law is indispensable, and behoved to be binding tho there had never been a Covenant, as hath been shown before. God's Dispensation might have been without taking Man's Consent by way of Covenant, but by the Law written in his Heart, obliging him to Obedience, under the just and proportioned Punishment of eternal exclusion from God's Favour; the breach or loss of no Covenant could take away that, it became indeed Man's Part of the Covenant of Works; but that Covenant is broken, yet the

the Obligation of the Law which was anterior to that Covenant, stands. In the Covenant of Works there was partly Merit, partly Favour, but the Covenant of Grace excludes all Merit, and Man's Part is by Faith only; so that Faith is not considered in its moral Goodness, for in that Consideration Love is a far more excellent and disinterested Vertue than Faith, but Holiness is on God's Part of the Covenant of Grace, as in the former Conception is expressed, he infuses the Habits of all the Christian Vertues in Conversion. Man's Engagement to endeavour to keep God's Law were of no Import, unless he did keep it, and so God's Part should not be at the time of Conversion, but at the time of Death, after the Course of Man's Life did appear. The Scripture makes no mention or moment of Man's Resolution, which is as the early Cloud, or Morning Dew, which quickly passeth away. Neither would the Terms of the Covenant of Grace be equal to all, the Endeavour of some would go much further than the Endeavour of others.

(5.) Some Divines in *England* have made Man's Part of the Covenant to be Faith, as it is a good Work, because it is said, *Abraham believed in God, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness*. That is, it was held sufficient, as if all Righteousness had been performed. But this had been still a Covenant of Works, accepting one Work in place of entire Obedience; but *Abraham's* believing in that Place, was not the Act of Faith, as it is Man's Part of the Covenant, for it relates to a former Place of Scripture, as the Scripture saith, *Abraham believed*, which was concerning his Son *Isaac*, who was promised to him in his Old Age; and therefore he staggered

gered not at the Promise of God, through Unbelief, which was a particular Act of Belief of that Promise, and was properly an Act of Holiness, and was so imputed or reputed as an Act of Righteousness; but the Act of Faith in which *Abraham* entered in the Covenant of Grace, was believing in God through the Messiah, to be justified, sanctified and glorified.

(6.) Some Reformed Divines in *France* and *England* bring good Works on Man's Part of the Covenant of Grace, as perfecting and compleating Faith, for only a lively Faith working by Love is saving, for there is a Faith that worketh not by Love; *The Devils believe and tremble, and Faith without Works is dead.* *Abraham* was justified by Works, when he offered *Isaac*. Seest thou how Faith wrought with his Works? *And Abraham believed, and it was imputed to him for Righteousness; by Works a Man is justified and not by Faith only:* Yet *Paul's* reasoning is much more full and accurate, discussing the Point of Justification by Faith only, without the Works of the Law, which could not consist if *James* spoke of Faith as Justifying; whereas *James* takes off an Error of those that thought they might be saved by believing the Gospel without Holiness, which he redargues as a wrong Consequence from *Paul*, and shews that not to be true Faith, but such a Faith as the Devils have, which cannot be that Act of Faith, whereby Man entereth in the Covenant of Grace, which is not believing the Truth of the Gospel, but relying on God for Salvation through Christ, according to the Gospel; and on the contrary, *Abraham's* Faith is brought in as true Faith, which yet was not the justifying Act: nor is the Justification there

there meant, the Justification in Conversion, which maketh a Man just, but that which manifests his Justification to himself and other Men: For *Paul* saith, *If Abraham were justified by Works, he hath whereof to glory, but not before God*; as if it were any thing whereof he could glory in himself, for all Glorifying and Boasting is excluded; but *Abraham's* glorying is in God, who freely justified him: and he rejoiced from that Act of Faith concerning his Son, evidencing the Soundness of the saving Faith, and the Manifestation of his Justification thereby, both to himself and other Men, whereby he gloryeth before Men and not before God. And whereas it is said, *That Faith worketh by Love*, it cannot be understood that Acts of Love are Acts of Faith, for they are Graces essentially distinct; but that Faith is Man's Part of the Covenant whereby Love is given upon God's Part: nor doth it follow that because Faith is perfected by Love, therefore its Essence is not distinct from Love; Man is perfected by Love, yet it is no part of his Being.

That Historical Faith, believing the Truth of the Gospel, is specifically different from saving Faith, and yet it is said, *That whosoever believeth Christ is come in the Flesh, is born of God, for no Man can call Jesus Lord but by the Spirit of God*; which imports no more than a Sign of saving Faith, at that time when there was so general an Opposition against Christ, when no Man did avow or own Christ hypocritically.

(7.) The Church of *Rome* hath more exceeded, in bringing Works as Man's Part of the Covenant of Grace, than any other Society of Christians; for they have made Works the whole and only Part of Man in the Covenant of Grace, and have
given

given no Preheminence to Faith, but to Charity or Love, consequently enough to that Principle. As it is said of the three eminent Christian Vertues, that of these the greatest is Charity; so that if Faith did save as a good Work, Love would much more save. They acknowledg no Justification distinct from Sanctification; they do not require good Works as the Condition of Salvation, but as the meritorious Cause of Salvation; that God in Justice could not deny Celestial Glory to those that live holily, and (which is yet more extravagant) Supererrogation is the common Opinion publicly preached in that Church: and when the Council of *Trent* was call'd on purpose to amend Errors in Doctrine and Manners, that had crept into that Church, not one Word in any of their Canons disapproving Works of Supererrogation, and the Treasure thereof, out of which the Pope by Assignment of the superfluous Merits of the Saints, may supply the Merits of others, and bring them to Heaven, either immediately upon Death, or shortning their purging by the purgatorial Fire, as soon as he thinks fit; and yet they dispute vehemently against the Imputation of the Holiness of Christ. They do acknowledg that Christ's Sufferings have satisfied the Justice of God, that without encroaching thereupon, he may give Pardon of Sin, and they do not ascribe the Pardon of Sin to the Merit of their Holiness, but only to the Expiation by Christ's Sufferings; and inconsistently enough they require purging by the purgatorial Fire, which cannot be thought Correction to amend them, and therefore could only be to cleanse and expiate, in which they derogate even from the Sufferings of Christ. But (to give them the
most

most benign Interpretation) they think the Forgiveness of Sin could not exalt Men to heavenly Blessedness, but that as in the Covenant of Works every one behoved to merit that Exaltation by their Works, which could not be after the Fall, because of Original Sin, whereby the eating of forbidden Fruit did condemn all Mankind, descending from *Adam* by Ordinary Generation, until Christ's Suffering had satisfied that Debt, and even the actual Transgressions of those in the Covenant of Grace: yet tho Men be still sinful, their Sins being pardoned as satisfied by Christ's Sufferings, Mens good Works lose not their Effect to merit Heaven, as well as *Adam's*, which is the only Difference they make between the Covenant of Grace, and the Covenant of Works.

Nothing can be more contrary to the Covenant of Grace, and to the Way of Salvation inculcated in the Gospel; wherein (1.) All Glorifying or Boasting of the Creature attributing any Part of its Salvation to it self, is excluded. *Where is boasting then? It is excluded; by what Law? of Works? Nay, but by the Law of Faith. Therefore we conclude (saith the Apostle) That a Man is justified by Faith without the Deeds of the Law. But God who is rich in Mercy, for his great Love wherewith he loved us, even when we were dead in Sin, hath quickned us together with Christ; where it is twice repeated, by Grace you are saved, through Faith, not of Works, lest any Man should boast. Yea Boasting is so far excluded, that Man cannot boast of Faith, as it is his Part of the Covenant of Grace, for it is said, By Grace you are saved, through Faith, and that not of your selves, it is the Gift of God. What could be more said to exclude Works from Man's Part of the Covenant*
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of Grace, not only that there cannot be an equivalent Cause deserving Glory, but not so much as the Terms upon which Glory was to be freely given. For it is expressly said, *that we are God's Workmanship created in Christ to good Works, which God hath before ordained or prepared, that we should walk in them*: and God hath not predestinated Men to Salvation for their Works foreseen or performed; *For whom he did foresee, them he did predestinate to be conformed to the Image of his Son*; which Image is Holiness, which is not the Cause but the End and Effect of Predestination: Good Works indeed are *Via Regni*, but not *Causa Regnandi*, and they are the Evidences of true and saving Faith, to be diligently followed, not only by reason of the indispensable Law and Duty, anterior in order to any Covenant, but as the Means to evidence true Grace, and give solid Peace; and therefore it is said, *Strait is the Gate and narrow is the Way that leadeth unto Life*, and that *the Kingdom of God is taken by Violence, and the Violent enter it by Force*, which doth import no more than the Way to the Kingdom: And where it is said, *Blessed are they that do his Commandments that they may have Right to the Tree of Life*, it doth not import Right by Merit, the Word being *ἐξουσία ἐν τῷ ζυγῷ ζῶντος*; so that Works can no more properly be called Right, than the Evidence of Lands or Inheritance are called the Rights thereof, as signifying the same; and therefore the explicatory Words are subjoined, *and may enter in through the Gates to the City*.

All others but the Romanists that bring in Works to the Covenant of Grace, bring them in as the Conditions of it, but not as a deserving meritorious Cause, much less as a superfluous supererogatory

errogatory Merit, seeing Christ hath declared so clearly, that the first and great Command of God is, *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy Heart, with all thy Soul, and with all thy Mind*; to which Luke adds, *with all thy Strength*. Can any Creature do more than this Command doth require? which doth not import that all are obliged to the same measure, but according to their several Capacities; *For to whom much is given, of them much is required*.

(3.) Nothing can be more apposite to take off that Pretence, that Remission of Sins is not attributed to Works, but only the Exaltation of Man from an Animal Life, such as *Adam* had in his Innocence, to an Angelical Life in Heaven, than where it is said, *Even when we were dead in Sin, bath he quickened us in Christ, and bath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly Places with Christ Jesus*.

What a pitiful Pretence is it, that by the Works of the Law are only meant the Mosaical Law, including Institutions and Ceremonies, when Faith is said to justify without the Works of the Law, and thereafter Works are excluded, without mention of any particular Law; all Negatives and Exclusives are Universal.

It is also a groundless Pretence to bring in Works to the Covenant of Grace, to make Men more diligent in Holiness, seeing it is the Evidence of true Faith, ever joined with it in Existence, tho not in Concurrence as the Terms of the Covenant on Man's part; for the habitual Grace of Holiness is God's part given in Regeneration, which even Infants must have.

I do not think it a convincing Reason against Merit, as it is against Supererrogation, or Super-Merit, that no Creature can merit except it did that which it was not obliged to do, seeing all Creatures are indispensably obliged to love God with all their Strength, and so to do all that is acceptable in his Sight: For then God should only have Punitive Justice, and not Premiative Justice, by proportionable Rewards, which yet certainly is as congruous to the Divine Perfections as the other. *To him that hath shall it be given. Well done thou good and faithful Servant, thou hast been faithful in a few things, I will make thee Ruler over many things.*

There are indeed two kinds of Rewards, and there is but one word commonly used to signify both. The one is a Reward proportioned to deserving, of which it is said, *To him that worketh, the Reward is not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt.* Whence it is clear that there is one Reward of Debt, and another of Grace, which is more properly to be called a Prize, or a Gratification. I doubt not that the Exaltation of *Adam*, if he had persisted in Integrity, from an Animal to an Angelical Life, and the Confirmation of him and his Posterity against the hazard of falling, was a Prize far above the Proportion of his Merit, and so a Reward not of Debt, but of Grace; for it was annexed to Perseverance in his Innocence, not to any high degree of his Attainments, and was lost by losing his Innocence, not by coming short of such a degree of Holiness. How impudently insolent is it then for any sinful Mortal to claim Celestial Glory, and to be out of hazard of Misery by their own Merit? which were the
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ground of the most excessive boasting; for then they might say that God had given them nothing that he could have withholden.

These are all the ways I know that Men pretend to ascribe any part of Salvation to their own good Works, or Holiness, whereof the last is the worst; and it is a wonder that such a Multitude of People, after so great Discoveries of its Falseness, should not be ashamed to own and urge it: Many of them at their Death durst not adventure on that ground, but betook themselves to the Merits of Christ alone; even their greatest Champion *Bellarmino*, to whose Merits more is ascribed in the Support of that Church, than to the greatest Merits of the most mortified Monks: but they are necessitated to own it, because their Church hath defined it as an Article of Faith; so that without Shipwreck of Infallibility, which is the Ground and Pillar of their Church, they cannot part from it. There are other Mistakes and Errors about the Terms of the Covenant of Grace, and the way of Man's Salvation, even of those that admit nothing of their Works, but who ascribe all to Faith, and acknowledge that Faith is not by the Power of Human Nature, but that it is the supernatural Gift of God. Those of the Augustan Confession, and the Arminians, hold that Christ hath purchased to all Mankind a Renovation of Nature, concreated with their Souls, whereby it becomes in their Power to repent, believe and be holy, or not, as they please and choose: And that these Graces are not given to every Individual at the time of their Conversion, but that their Election is by God's Fore-knowledg, that they will make use of that Power aright, which

God hath given them, and will repent, believe and be holy at their Death: tho during their Life they may oftentimes fall from all these Graces; yet God who foresaw these would not fall away finally, did elect them to Glory. In this they think they do not boast, because this Power was the Gift of God, but given to all alike, which therefore they call universal Grace; thereby they think they fall neither in with Pelagians, who attribute these Powers to Human Nature, nor with Papists, that attribute their Salvation to their own good Works: Yet these Opinions are abundantly inconsistent with Revelation of the way of God's dealing with Man, and even with Reason. They are very clearly inconsistent with the Wisdom of God, who doth nothing in vain: Were it not in vain to give Grace to the greatest part of Mankind, whom God knew would never make use of it, or at least would not continue in it, but finally fall from him? Is it not evidently more consonant to the Wisdom of God, to give Grace only to the Elect at the time of Conversion? Could it be consistent with the Wisdom of God, that he should reconcile with, and accept into Favour those whom he knew would apostatize and desert him? I know nothing they can pretend to extricate the Wisdom of God in such a course, but that it could not consist with God's Justice, to require of Creatures that which were impossible for them to perform, much less to condemn them to eternal Punishment for that which was impossible; and therefore both the Wisdom and Goodness of God required that even the Damned should be inexcusable, and so all Mankind behaved to be put in a Capacity of Salvation, if not by the natural

tural Powers of Man in Creation, at least by super-added Powers after the Fall. But there is no necessity to infer that kind of universal Grace to render all Mankind capable of Salvation, and to make the Damned inexcusable. It is sufficient, and consonant to the Word of God, that Christ's Merits should be in Value sufficient to purge away the Sins of the whole World, and that Grace should be effectual to all of them, who when it was offered to them did not reject the Offer and cleave to their Sins.

These Men ought to be satisfied, that through Christ there is an universal Grace purchased, given or offered, and refused, which sufficiently satisfieth the many Expressions in Scripture, of *Christ's dying for all Men*, yea for every Man, and for the Sins of the World. That pretended insoluble Argument of the Arminians, That must be true which every Man is bound to believe, but every Man is bound to believe that Christ died for him, because God commands him to believe in Christ, which therefore obligeth him to believe; therefore it is true that Christ died for every Man. This Argument hath been a great Bugbear which hath puzzled many, and there are several Answers made to it; and I think there is yet a better Answer than I have hitherto met with, that the Fallacy lies in this, that there is not a Difference made between a Command and an Invitation or Exhortation, to do that to which the Party exhorted is not obliged, but whereby a great Benefit may arise upon the Performance. Such is the Expression of Christ, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you Rest to your Souls*; which is only an Invitation to enter into the Covenant of Grace:

For the Nature of all Covenants is, that the Engagements of either Party must be voluntary and free, yea even in the Covenant of Works, (as hath been said before) albeit Innocence by Obedience to all God's Commands was an indispensable Duty, yet *Adam's* Engagement superadded thereto was voluntary; and therefore God will not condemn Sinners because they have not imbraced the Offer of Grace, by believing, as the Penalty of not believing, but will only exclude them from the Benefit of that Covenant, because they did not assent unto it, and will punish them for the Transgressions of his Laws: and therefore it is not true that all Men are obliged to believe; for then the Damned, and those who have sinned against the Holy Ghost were obliged to believe, which were altogether in vain, neither being capable of Pardon: So that not believing in God through Christ for Salvation, is not the Cause efficient, but deficient of Damnation. It will further appear hereafter, how Christ the second *Adam* hath restored what the first *Adam* lost, in putting every Man in a Capacity to be saved, and that no Man should be damned but for his own fault, which is the Sentence of the Synod of *Dort*, against the Rigor of which the Arminians do so much inveigh.

There is no necessity to recur to that Answer, that by all Men is meant not *singula generum*, but *genera singulorum*, and by the World the World of the Elect; which are not apt to convince these Men, that the whole World should only be the World of the Elect, or that every Man should be every kind of Men, or that this Interpretation will quadrate with that place of Scripture, *Wilt thou by thy Meat destroy him for whom Christ died?*

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And the Wicked that hear and contemn the Gospel are said to *trample under foot the Son of God*. When Christ saith, *I came not to the World to judg the World, but to save the World*; by the World cannot be meant the World of the Elect; for Christ's coming into the World was by conversing with all the World, Elect or Reprobate, and he came to judg all the World, both Elect and Reprobate, tho it was not his chief End in coming: Therefore the World he came to save must be so also understood of all, relating to the World he came into, which is solidly and sharply prosecuted by the eminently learned Monsieur *Claud* in his *Posthumous Works* upon the Priestly Office of Christ. It cannot be thought that the strongest Asseveration of God, *As I live I delight not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that he should repent and be saved*, were only to be restrained to the Elect, or *genera singulorum*; or that it is the Will of God that all Men should be saved, which is not meant properly of the Will of God, which can never be ineffectual, but of the Pleasure of God: for it is not said actively it is the Will of God to save all Men, but that it is the Will of God they should be saved; that is, it would be pleasing to him if they were all and every one saved, by their accepting the Offer of Grace, or not rejecting it. But that way is only distinguishable from Pelagianism by a Notion not warranted by the Word of God: For if the Pelagians have not said, I am sure they might say, that by the Powers of Nature they meant nothing else, but that Power which every Man hath by his Creation and his Birth; and might say that those Powers *Adam* had were by the free Gift of God, so that there were

no more ground to glory in the one way than in the other. I do not doubt but many of these Men abhor Pelagianism, which makes me always hope that there may be a Reconciliation between these and other Protestants, which are commonly called Reformed.

If all Mankind had a Power to believe, as much as they have a Power to reason or choose, What ground is there to distinguish the one Power from the other? But if Men cannot believe when they will, but when the Spirit of God hath in their Conversion given them new Powers or Faculties, or at least sincerely offered them, and would put them in their Power if they will not reject them. There is a clear and manifest Difference between natural and supernatural Acts, or between Nature and Grace, that Grace must have a new Power given freely at Conversion, whereby the converted are enabled to repent, and believe: in respect of this Power Christ saith, *Without me ye can do nothing*, which is not spoken as to natural Powers; and by this Power the Apostle saith, *I can do all things by him that strengtheneth me; for of him we have both to will and to do.*

That way doth not only derogate from the Grace of God, but from the Happiness of Creatures; for thereby it is impossible that any Creature can be certain of their continuance in their Integrity, or in the Favour of God, not only in this Life, but even in Heaven. For if their free Will can bring them into God's Favour when they please, or lose it when they please in this Life, (as they do acknowledg) what have they to secure them against the like in the next Life? Will they be more glorious than the Devils were before they fell?

fell? Yet their free Will carried them from that Estate. But if God do confirm the Elect Angels and Saints that they shall never fall, certainly it is not only possible, but futable for him so to do towards those that in this Life he receives into his Favour by the Covenant of Grace. What then can induce them to deny themselves, and all others one of the most glorious Pearls of the Christian Crown, the Perseverance of Saints? when Christ hath said, *That no Man can pluck his Sheep out of his Hand*; and God hath said, *That whom he loves, he loves unto the end*. Or, why are we bidden to make sure our own Salvation? Why is a Plerophory, or full assurance of Salvation held forth in Scripture, if these be unattainable in this Life? It is a pitiful Evasion, that Men may be sure they have Grace, but not sure they will keep it; for the Assurance relates not to Grace, but to Glory and Salvation. It is true, *If the righteous Man depart from his Righteousness, it shall be remembred no more*. But it is as true, that the gracious God who freely gave Righteousness, will not suffer the Righteous to depart from it, either in this Life or that which is to come.

There is another way of universal Grace maintained by some of those of the Augustan Confessor, and it seems to be so held in the Liturgy of the Church of *England*, that Grace is given to all who are baptized at the time of their Baptism. The Church of *Rome* excludes all from Mercy and Glory, that are not actually baptized, tho they give them a more easy Quarter, which they call *Limbus Infantum*, than those of riper Age; and certainly they must place Idiots there as well as Infants: yet they are more cruel that condemn these

Infants and Idiots to eternal Torment. No Protestant excludes Salvation by the want of Baptism, and none of them do include Salvation by Baptism, but only Regeneration; nor do they hold that that Regeneration doth always, or for the most part continue, but that these Infant-Saints may fall away; yet all that die in Infancy must be saved, for they cannot fall away. The Liturgy saith, we do not doubt that all that are baptized are truly regenerate, which I would rather interpret as a Presumption in the Judgment of Charity than as a positive Assertion in the Judgment of Verity: As if one saw a Man of Age giving Signs of his Belief baptized, said, I doubt not this Man is regenerate; yet some of the Learned understand it otherwise, who yet are not for amissible Grace, and therefore perplex themselves, endeavouring to invent a Sacramental Grace of Regeneration, being conditional upon Faith at the time of Discretion. The Papists are more puzzled to clear how the Water of Baptism regenerates; for they think it not enough that God hath promised to regenerate all at that time, but they hold that the Water sacramentally used doth it, *opere operato*, by a Power given it by God.

I know no reason to confirm this Opinion: it is true, Christ saith, *Except a Man be born of Water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God.* This would exclude all that were not baptized from Heaven, if there the Kingdom of God signified Heaven, which none hold but Papists: And therefore many by the Kingdom of Heaven understand the Christian Church, as it must be understood in several other places; so that the meaning will be, no Man can be a Member of the visible Church,

Church, but he that is, or is rationally supposed to be regenerated by the Spirit of God, and likewise consecrated to God by Baptism: So that it is of the same import with these words, *Whosoever shall believe and be baptized, shall be saved.* The joining of Water to the Spirit, can no more infer the necessity of Water, than of Fire, which is elsewhere joined to the Spirit. It is from this Opinion (tho without Warrant) that Baptism is called the Laver of Regeneration, because a Laver imports Washing, but Regeneration is to be attributed to the sanctifying of the Spirit; the Baptized are consecrated by the Water of Baptism, not as antecedent to Regeneration, but more frequently consequent thereto.

I see no reason to prove Baptism to be a converting Ordinance, but the quite contrary in the very Institution of it. *He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved:* So that there is no warrant to baptize any but such as in the Judgment of Charity may be accounted Believers, either by actual or habitual Faith: Therefore Baptism doth not confer the Grace of believing, nor hath God shown that he will ordinarily confer that Grace at Baptism. This is much confirmed by Circumcision, which was the Seal of the Covenant, which could not be meant of the actual sealing and confirming, which was in every circumcised Person; for it were inconsistent with the Wisdom of God to have designed a Seal for that use which were only applicable to Men, and not to Women: But it was a Seal confirming that Society in which it was used, to be the Society wherein ordinarily the Covenant of Grace was to be found; as it was also the solemn Inauguration and Entry into the Church,
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so is Baptism, which is now the solemn Entry into the Christian Church, and is in place of Circumcision; and therefore the *Anabaptists* have no just ground to scruple at the baptizing of Infants born to be Members of the Church, which have not only a presumptive inward Holiness, but a federal Holiness, or such a Holiness as all things consecrated to God have; much more Children consecrated by the Members of the Church, and dedicated to God by their Parents, or in case of their Death or Incapacity, by their nearest Relations, or even by others, from the presumptive Will of their Parents. I see no Warrant for any under the pretence of being God-fathers or God-mothers, to baptize the Children of Infidels, tho they were in their Power.

All these ways of general and amissible Grace do much inroach upon the Wisdom of God: Why should he give Grace to so many who he knew would not make use of it, were not that Grace in vain? But if Grace be given always and effectually at the time of Conversion, it is both sufficient and quadrant with the Wisdom of God, who doth nothing in vain. It will breed no Difficulty, that God calleth many whom he doth not choose, because that is necessary to put them in a possibility of Salvation, and to render those inexcusable that do refuse it: But to give actual Grace to those who would throw it away, were to cast Pearls before Swines.

All these ways of conceiving the Covenant of Grace, and the Divine Dispensations of Election and Reprobation, shew, that generally Christians agree, that it is an eminent part of the amiable Aspect of God, that he hath put no Rational Creature

ture under the Necessity of Damnation; tho most Part do overdo, holding more than what is necessary or convenient for that Effect.

There can be nothing more clear, and there is nothing more inculcated in Scripture, than that the Way of Salvation is by the way of Covenant, which implies in its Nature mutual Prestations of the Parties covenanting towards each other, but doth not imply that these Prestations must be of equal Value, or of any Merit, but that the Force of the Covenant is from the Engagement of the Covenanters, by their Choice and Consent, both as to the Matter and Manner. There be Covenants where the Performances are of equivalent Value, deserving each other: but it were Arrogance enough for *Adam* to have thought the Covenant of Works were such; and it were Insolence to imagine the Covenant of Grace to be such.

As in the Covenant of Works there were two Branches. a Covenant between God and *Adam*, for himself and his Posterity, and if he had stood, there behoved to have been a Covenant between God and each of his Elect Posterity, particularly for himself: The Word makes it appear to be so in the Covenant of Grace, the Father did covenant with the Son (foreknowing *Adam's* Fall) to become the second *Adam*, to restore and exceed that which was known the first would lose, by assuming the Nature of the first *Adam*, and with it not only performing that, in which *Adam* failed, by not continuing in Integrity, performing the whole Will of God, and thereby putting all Mankind in a nearer Capacity to Blessedness, than *Adam* had done, tho he had stood; for there is no
ground

ground to think his Posterity would have been confirmed without their own Trial, more than he; but the second *Adam* put not only all Mankind out of the Necessity of Misery, but it became effectual unto all, so far as it was congruous to the Divine Perfections, which could not admit of Reconciliation with Sinners cleaving to their Sin, or of those who partaking of Divine Illumination, and of the Tastes or the Powers of the World to come, should despightfully hate the Spirit, the Worker of these. All the rest of Mankind (as the Father foreknew them, and predestinated them to be conformed to the Son, so) the Son undertook effectually to redeem them, and glorify them, and the Holy Ghost to call them, sanctify and preserve them. The second *Adam* did undertake yet much more than the First, to satisfy the Justice, and manifest the Purity of God, more than if all Mankind had perished. This Branch of the Covenant of Grace is compleat as to the Elect, that could not through Incapacity covenant for themselves; but those that could, were to have the Offer of the Covenant of Grace made to them by their Vocation, tho not to all, in equal Fulness and Clearness. It was not sutable to the Wisdom of God, that those who rejected the first Operations of the Spirit, intimating to them that they were Sinners, deserving Exclusion from God's Favour, and yet that God was merciful to Penitents, and would make them Holy and Happy, if they did not obstinately cleave to their Sins, and reject that Motion; but in the rest, and even in some of these Rejecters God carrieth on the Work of Sanctification and Salvation in his own Way, bringing such to the Light of the Gospel, or the Light of the Gospel

Gospel to them, and opening their Eyes to see the Wonders of his Law, and to discern spiritual Things, and giving them the Inclination to accept of the Offer of the Covenant of Grace, and to enter in it for themselves, by that saving Act of Faith, which is all their Part in the Covenant of Grace.

Of this we have two eminent Examples in Scripture, the one Personal, the other National, by Miracles manifested to the two great Apostles *Peter* and *Paul*. That of *Peter* was from *Cornelius*, who neither was a Jew nor a Proselyte, but was come the Length of natural Religion, to worship only the one God, to whom an Angel was sent from God, to show him how he should worship the true God aright. The other was by a Vision to the Apostle *Paul*, of a Man of *Macedonia*, beseeching him to go to that People to help them, who (for ought doth appear) were then Heathens. It doth not suffice to a distinct Knowledge of the Covenant of Grace, to know that by Faith we are saved: but those who have Capacity, ought to enquire what that Faith is; whether it be the Habit of Faith, or an Act of Faith; whether it be a special Act of Faith, and what that is; whether it be one single Act only, or if to be renewed; and whether it be saving by any thing in itself, and if we may perceive any Consideration why God made that Act of Faith Man's Part of the Covenant, rather than any other.

As to the first Point, to have Faith, and to believe, are used as equivalent Terms, both in common Use and in the Scripture, but in a great Latitude; for to believe doth oftentimes signify a Judgment of the Truth of any Proposition:

sition: Men do believe, that is they think likely or probable, whatever the Ground of their Opinion be; but more strictly, Belief is taken for a Judgment, which hath for its Motive the Perfections of some Person expressing it, endued with such Perfections as may warrant an Assent, without any other Reason. That Person must be a virtuous Person, from whose Actings it appears, that he doth own the Principles of Morality, and hath no Tentation to fail in the Application of them in that Point; so not only a Liar, but a vicious Person, or one in Necessity, or biassed by Favour or Hatred, in Prudence is not a credible Person: or if the Matter be that which is not the particular Object of that Sense, which he hath in Vigour, it is but a Matter of Opinion. Faith upon account of credibility is to be attributed to God alone absolutely, who can neither be ignorant, err, be biassed, mistaken or deceived; and is Infinite in moral Perfection. Creatures may also be trusted in defferent Degrees, according to the Moment of the Matter: But no Man ought to trust any Creature, as to the Necessaries of his Salvation, but God alone immediately, or by Mediation of those that have his evident Credentials. This kind of Faith is a Prerequisite to the Covenant of Grace, but no Part of it. For the Devils do thus believe and tremble, they know God to be certainly true, and that all he expresseth is true, whatever improbability might arise against it. There is yet a stricter Sense of Believing, or Faith whereby one expects good from another, when it is sutable to him to give or do it, and to the other to receive it: In this Sense we do not say, one believeth another, but he believeth in him, he trusteth to him, he leans, relies

relies and rests upon him. The Object of this Faith is Faithfulness. It doth not arise alone upon the Veracity or Truth of the Person trusted, but requires many other Perfections, that he be Benign and Gracious, that he be Powerful and Plentiful, as to that wherein he is trusted. It does not require his Promise, which would make the thing expected an Act of Justice, but the Excellency of his Nature; so Creatures may and do trust to Creatures according to their Perfections. A Secret may be trusted to a faithful Person, tho neither Powerful nor Rich; and if Experience hath shown him to be trusty, it will be a Confidence without all doubt, he is plentiful in Capacity to forbear to reveal a Secret, he loses nothing by keeping it. To another a Man may trust his Money without Writ or Witness, if he know him to be Vertuous, tho he were Poor, much more if he be Rich, and so under no Tentation to abuse his Trust. And it were but a Folly to require a Promise to restore, for there being no Means of Proof, he might as safely violate his Promise as his Faithfulness, and would think himself less trusted or obliged. It is Indiscretion first to relate a Matter, and then to say it is a Secret, or to require Secrecy, because he that accepts the Trust should do it freely: his Promise may oblige him to keep it close, but not his Faithfulness, unless it be first told him that there is to be revealed a Secret to him, which he may lawfully keep close, that he may forbid the discovery if he will not lie under that Obligation of trust. He that is pursued or searched after for his Life, if he be not able to defend himself, tho he have no Relation or Confident near him, he will run for shelter to the most vertuous and fit Person,
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that without Fault may cover him. In all these there is Trust, but without any Promise or Paction. There are some things which no Man with prudence can believe in any Creature, because no Creature can have Power to give all things that another may need. God alone is absolutely Faithful, for he is Alsufficient, he is boundlessly Benign, he cannot have any thing less by whatever he can give; yet his Faithfulness doth not require, that he should give, or do any thing to any, but what is congruous for him to give and them to receive. It were very incongruous for him to give Grace or Glory to one, who knowing him, or tasting of his heavenly Power, did hate him with Despite. He doth much Good by his Bounty, respecting nothing in the Object, but its Capacity to receive; much more by his Mercy and Compassion upon the Miserable; but most of all to those that trust in him, and expect from him. This is by his Faithfulness, the others are by his Mercy and Benignity. The Weakness of Creatures hath made him not only Promise but Swear, yet it is Indiscretion to urge him upon his Oath, or even upon his Promise, where his Faithfulness were sufficient. No other can give Grace or Glory but he, and those may be trusted for, by all that did not hate him, or did cleave to their Sins, and refuse to become Holy, and there is no Foundation of Distinction of one Man from another. In this Case he needs not enquire whether he be elected and contained in the Covenant between the Persons of the Trinity. It were impossible for him to know that immediately, but only by consequence from a true and lively Faith working by Love, purifying the Heart, tho then Confidence and Assurance that it was true and

and saving Faith, not Presumption, may be inferred from a Holy Life.

Faith in this Sense is the Christian Vertue next in Excellency to Love; and as Love makes the Pleasure and Glory of God the last End, so Faith gives the Resolution for pursuing all the Means towards that End, and towards the next subordinate End, the Tranquillity of the Mind, trusting in God for Direction in all the Means towards these Ends; that as the natural Man trusts to, and rests on natural Means for obtaining his Ends, so the spiritual Man trusts to, and depends upon the Conduct of the Holy Ghost, by supernatural Means especially. Therefore the Apostle *Paul* saith, and gives warrant to all who walk Christianly to say, *The Life that I now live, is by the Faith in the Son of God; who loved me, and gave himself for me.*

The second Point proposed, is whether that Faith which is Man's Part in the Covenant of Grace, be the Habit of Faith, or any one or more Acts of that Habit, In which I conceive it is very clear, that a Covenant cannot be entered and continued by an Habit, but it doth necessarily require an Act of the Will; tho it is true, that the Habit of Faith is more universally necessary to Salvation, than that Act of Faith, by which Men come into the Covenant of Grace: For Infants come into that Covenant by Regeneration, when the Habits of Grace are infused in their Souls, as they and all the Elect were undertaken for in that Branch of the Covenant of Grace, which from Eternity was among the Persons of the Blessed Trinity. Yet they could not be said to be actually in the Covenant, till they were not only made Creatures, but also new Creatures by Regeneration,

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and Sanctification of the Spirit. It is a needless Curiosity to enquire whether they exert any Acts of that Habit in this Life. It is said that at the Salutation of the Blessed Virgin to *Elizabeth*, the Child in her Womb did spring for Joy; but whether the Springing of the Child was from his or her Joy, is not necessary to determine. I doubt not but the Soul of an Infant is capable to act its imbred Principles, if it could perceive the Objects thereof; but it is so delighted in that tender Case to which it is wedded, that it can think of nothing else, as Experience shews of all Men when in extream Passions, their Souls can think of nothing but of the Object of these Passions: Nor do I doubt, but God may so far manifest himself to an Infant's Soul, as to give it great Joy; but as there is no Necessity, so there is no Probability that such Souls should enter in Covenant, tho it be most congruous to the Divine Perfections, and to the Way God hath chosen, that all that are capable should actually enter into a Covenant with God at their Conversion. When it is said, *Without Faith it is impossible to please God*, I do rather think that by Faith Acts are meant, rather than the Habit; albeit the new Creature by the Habit be pleasant to God, yet not as an Act, but as a Quality: whereas to please, signifies an Act pleasing, and so it must relate to those that are capable to covenant with God, in relation to whom all Directions and Instructions in the World, are to be understood. I am not moved by this Objection, that if the Covenant of Grace be entered by an Act of Faith, Children and Idiots must either be excluded from the Covenant of Grace, or there must be a different Way of saving Children, and Men of Discretion,
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and a different Covenant of Grace for Children; For it is beyond question, that God's Way with Children and Idiots is different from his Way with others, and that the Rules and Directions revealed in Scripture, relate only to those of Discretion, capable of them. So the Apostle in determining Man's Part of the Covenant of Grace, opposeth the hearing of Faith unto Works, and faith likewise, *How can they believe, unless they hear?* Which neither relateth to, nor is exclusive of Children from the Covenant of Grace, yet the Covenant of Grace is one for all, the Son having covenanted from Eternity for all the Elect, to bring them into the Covenant of Grace by Regeneration, exerted according to their Capacity, by actual believing of those, who are capable so to act, which also is an Evidence that the Act of Faith is not saving by any thing absolutely necessary in it self, but by the free Choice and Institution of God.

The third Point proposed, is what Act of Faith that is, by which Men enter into the Covenant of Grace, and which is their Part of the Covenant. Many hold it to be a Perswasion of the covenanting Person, that Christ died for him; whereby it must be an Act of the Understanding: but I see not how that can hold; for covenanting must be by an Act of the Will, promising or otherwise performing the Covenanters Part, which is oftentimes in the one Party no more than an Acceptance; as in a Trust or Commission, the one Party gives the Trust or Commission, which doth make no Covenant, but an Offer; but when the other Party accepts, then the Contract is compleat, and the Acceptor is thereby bound to follow the Trust and Commission; and make an Account, and the Gi-

ver is obliged to refund the Expences. Albeit Contracts be by mutual Consent, and that Consent signifies to have the same Thought, yet Agreement in one Mind makes no more a Covenant, than when two are of one Opinion in Contemplation; but a Covenant is ever somewhat practicable, and therefore tho Acts of Understanding precede, the Covenant it self is by Acts of the Will.

The Description of saving Faith by Perswasion, is but by a Consequent, which ought to be endeavoured by all, yet is not attained by all; for many are in the Covenant of Grace, that come not the Length of Perswasion that Christ died effectually for them, and that thereby they are reconciled to God, and shall be saved; for tho they were perswaded that Christ died for all and every Man, that would import nothing to saving Faith; for it were much more evident that the Effect of Christ's Death for all Men were not the same, seeing so many trample under Foot the Blood of the Covenant, and so few are saved. Therefore no Man hath just Ground to be perswaded that Christ died effectually for him, or with Intention to make him holy and happy, or any further than to put him in a Condition to be holy and happy, if he himself did not hinder it. Therefore tho believing in Christ were not only proposed to all, but imposed on all as a Duty, yet it is only a Duty in the Order God hath imposed it; to wit, that all Men should consider their sinful natural Estate, and that the just Reward of Sin would be eternal Death without Repentance, which none could escape who cleaved to any kind of Sin, and hated to be reformed; and that therefore they should be willing and endeavour to be reformed, and use the Means appointed

ed by God for that End, and should throw themselves upon God's Mercy through Christ's Merit, if thereby they found that the delighting in Sin, (in those Kinds especially which did most easily beset them) did cease, and that the Love to, and Delight in God, did in some measure take Place: But to think to reach the highest Step of the Scale *per Saltum*, were altogether without warrant, unless it were extraordinary, as in *Paul's Conversion*. *Paul* to the Romans gives the true Warrants of that Perswasion; *As many as are led by the Spirit are the Sons of God. The Spirit it self beareth Witness with our Spirit, that we are the Children of God; and if Children, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint-Heirs with Christ.* Hence it is evident, how little Moment is in that Arminian Quibble so much magnified by them, that Christ must have died for all Men, because all Men are bound to believe he died for them.

We must therefore yet enquire the particular Covenanting Act of Faith, which being so necessary, is many Ways expressed and set forth in Scripture, that it may be reached by several Capacities; it is called a Looking to Christ for Salvation, *Look unto me all ye Ends of the Earth, and be saved.* A turning to God; *Turn ye, turn ye, for why will you die O House of Israel?* A coming to Christ; *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy ladened, and I will give you rest to your Souls.* And to the Refractory it is said; *Ye will not come to me that ye may have Life.* A drawing near to God; *Draw near unto God, and he will draw near unto you.* An answering of God's Call; *Thou saidst, Seek ye my Face; my Heart answered, Thy Face Lord wilt I seek, hide not thy Face from me.* A receiving of

Christ; *He came to his own, but his own received him not, but to all that did receive him he gave Power to become the Sons of God.* So then the saving Act of Faith must imply all these, not that he who entereth in the Covenant, must have expressly all these Acts, but that the Act he must have, must imply and import them all, and be virtually as much as they all.

The Spirit of God in this Branch of the Covenant of Grace, does not proceed in one way with all the Elect: *As the Wind moveth whither it listeth, and no Man knoweth whence it cometh, or whither it goeth, so is the Spirit of God.* Some are chased in by the Thundrings and Terrors of the Law, running as a pursued Man to a Rock, a Fortrefs, a Tower, or a Strength, or as in the hazard of Shipwrack running into an Harbour. As those, who by Peter's Sermon convincing the Jews that they had denied the Holy One, and the Just, and had killed the Prince of Life: *Let all the House of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ.* Now when they heard this they were pricked in their Hearts, and said unto Peter, and the rest of the Apostles, *Men and Brethren, what shall we do?* And God opened their Ears and their Hearts to receive Instruction. But God gaineth others by the sweet and still Voice of the Gospel, alluring their Hearts to trust in his Mercy and Faithfulness, as being so gracious, that he delights not in the Death of a Sinner, but rather that they should repent and live; that he will not disappoint those who becomingly trust in him. He sometimes begins with the Light of Nature to lead in the revealed Light of the Gospel, as Paul dealt with the Athenians, and

and faith to *Timothy*, *God hath not given us the Spirit of Fear, but of Power, and of Love, and of a sound Mind.* With some the Spirit proceeds by degrees, giving a Spirit of Bondage to fear before the Spirit of Adoption, as *Paul* faith, *We have not received the Spirit of Bondage again to fear, but we received the Spirit of Adoption, whereby we cry Abba Father.* These are the ordinary ways of the Spirit, in which the saving Act of Faith is always in the order of Nature anterior to God's part of this particular Covenant of Grace, whereby he regenerates Believers, begetting in their Souls the Habits of Grace and Holiness, which is a new Creation, which these and they that receive them are called new Creatures: and ordinarily both parts of the Covenant go together, Believing and Regeneration, yet some are sanctified from the Womb, who come afterwards actually to believe.

The ordinary Procedure of the Spirit held forth in the Scripture, hath some Operations of the Spirit anterior to the entering into the Covenant of Grace, which are called Preparatory Works. And first, the Spirit convinceth every Man that cometh to have the use of Reason, that he is a Sinner, by comparing his Life with the Light and Law of Nature written in his Heart, that he hath broken that Law, that thereby he deserveth Punishment, tho his Transgression were never so secret; which necessarily imports that there is an invisible Judge that can inflict it, and who certainly knoweth it, and will not pardon it while it is approved; and the same Light of Nature shews that there is hope of Pardon to those that do not approve their Transgressions, and are grieved for them. I doubt not but all this is wrought upon the

most barbarous and ignorant Savage; for tho by Prepossession and Custom, many of the Laws of Nature are never adverted, yet ever so much ariseth in the Mind as maketh the Natural Conscience perceive the Transgression of them, and a Difference between those who continue and delight in the Transgressions of them, and those who grieve for them upon account of Punishment, tho they have no distinct Perceptions of that invisible Power, from which they fear Punishment, or tho their mistaken Interest, and the Opinion of their Neighbours seduce them to believe, that that fear of Punishment of secret Transgressions is but from a groundless Fancy, such as they have in the Darkness and not in the Light.

That which perswadeth me of this general Operation of the Spirit of God is, that otherwise the greater part of the World were in inevitable necessity of eternal Misery, and could never accuse themselves even when awakened in Hell, and made clearly to know that through their own fault they were in that Misery, which they might escaped if they had followed these Motions by their Natural Conscience to repent. I have before cleared my Mind, that the blessed and benign Conception of God doth import so much, that he condemneth none to eternal Torment, but for that Sin which they might have escaped as to the Punishment of it.

Tho there be no necessity that the Spirit should further follow those who hate to be reformed; yet to magnify the Justice and Benignity of God, the Spirit proceeds frequently further, even with Rejecters, clearing up in them the Light of Nature,
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bringing them to know the Word of God, in which not only the Light of Nature is revived, but much revealed that hath no Foundation in the Light of Nature; whence there arises a Perswasion of the Truth of that Word, and all revealed in it. He gives also frequently the Perception of the hazard and horror of Sin, the forbearing of the outward Acts of some Sins, and the inward Inclination to some others; a natural Pleasure in some Vertues, and thence oft-times follows an unwarrantable Perswasion of having obtained Grace and Right to Glory: If these, or some of them were not, the Reprobate would become without all hope of Mercy, and as malicious as the Devils; yet these are given not for their own sakes, but for the common good of Mankind, and the special good of the Elect, but by none of these is the Covenant of Grace entered.

The Act of Faith by which Men enter into the Covenant of Grace, is not in their own Power, nor can they exert it at any time they please, even when they hear or meditate upon the Word of God, or when they hear, read and meditate upon the most convincing and perswading Preaching, or when they do most earnestly pray to be pardoned and accepted. All these are but the Ordinances of God, with which he doth ordinarily confer Regeneration, and which are therefore Mens Duty to use them; and it were to tempt God to desire or expect Conversion in another way: Neither are these meer Formalities or Solemnities, but have their proper Effects, especially in loosning the Soul from its Addictedness to Sin; for it is said expressly, *By Grace ye are saved through Faith, and not of your selves, it is the Gift of*
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God. There must therefore be a present inward Vocation, Motion or Excitation of the Spirit, offering to the Soul to turn it from cleaving to Sin unto God, and to give Pardon, Reconciliation, Holiness and Happiness, but not conferring these until the Soul be willing to accept them. There will be little difficulty to embrace that Offer, as to the Pardon of Sin, nor to have the general Notion of Happiness, tho if the particular way of Happiness were explicated to be the Delight in God and Spiritual Things, and not in Carnal Delights. The prepossessed Soul by sensible Pleasures might readily loath that as light Food, yet the greatest Difficulty would be in being willing to be made holy, that is, consecrated and devoted to the Love of, and to the Delight in God above all things, with an Opposition to all known Sin. This therefore must be the Gift of God, freely given at the time of that Motion of the Spirit, to such only as are elected, whether they be such as are not positively resolved to cleave to Sin, or reject such Motions, or such whom God even against that Reluctancy will overcome, and maketh willing to embrace and accept the Offer and Motion of the Spirit. This is that inward Call which is one of the Links of the Golden Chain of Salvation; for whom he predestinated, them he also called, justified and glorified, and which therefore is called effectual Calling, to which there is never made effectual Resistance, it being ever stronger than any Resistance, yet not so that the Soul could not possibly resist, but that God had made the Call so strong, that though it was willingly embraced, not necessarily, but freely, yet always effectually. Albeit God might give such an Inclination

nation to accept Holiness, as he gives to desire Happiness, yet there is no ground to think that he doth so; for such Acts which are absolutely necessary deserve not so much as Praise, being but as the Instincts of Brutes. It is a great Mistake to think that God's inward Call cannot be effectual, unless it gave as strong an Inclination as is the desire of Happiness: For he knows certainly the Effect of every Condition by Nature or Grace; and by his Wisdom he does no more than what is requisite for his Purposes. They highly derogate from the Glory of God, that imagine his Call to the Elect is only sufficient, but inefficacious, and that its Efficacy must be by the Creature.

I do conceive that the entering into the Covenant of Grace may be in the way of Adoration thus. My God, I do believe that thou delightest not in the Death of Sinners, but rather that they should repent and live in thy Favour eternally, who feel Sin to be a Burden, and do not cleave to any known Sin, but betake themselves to thee to be delivered from it, and to become thy Servants, trusting in thee for all things necessary for Holiness and Happiness. I am sensible of the Bondage of my Sin, and that I am not able to free my self from that Bondage; yet I believe thou hast offered to enable me, and do humbly accept thy Offer purchased through Christ the Mediator, and do resign my self to be directed by thy holy Spirit in the way of Holiness to Happiness.

Here are all the Essentials of a Covenant, God's Offer manifested to the Conscience, believed and accepted, wherewith the Believer, as by the Offer he was called, so the Call is made effectual by Justification, Reconciliation, Pardon, Conversion,

332 *MEDITATION XVIII.*

Regeneration, Adoption, and by giving the Habits of Holiness never to be eradicated.

This Act of Faith is by the Apostle *Paul* to the *Romans* called the embracing the Atonement, and to the *Hebrews*, the embracing the Promises; by the Apostle *John*, the coming to Christ to be saved.

All the Terms of God's Offer, and his enabling the Sinner to accept, are at once and together; and tho there be many Expressions thereof in Scripture, they are not all different, nor is there necessity of an express Thought of them in entering the Covenant of Grace; neither is this exclusive of what other way God may take to glorify those who cannot expressly thus believe: for it is not necessary for us to know it, seeing the Scripture is all directed to Hearers and Believers, and doth not specially reveal God's other ways of Salvation, tho what was said of Children in Scripture is all to their Advantage, yet nothing is specially express'd of the manner or measure of it.

I know not any Conception possible which could so much exalt the Justice, the Mercy, and the Faithfulness of God, leaving nothing to the Creature to attribute any part of its Happiness to itself, which could be consistent with a Covenant between God and the saved Soul, which is confirmed by the whole stream of Scripture. In this Act all the former Expressions in Scripture of Conversion and Regeneration are implied. Yet this Objection ariseth, that this Conception makes the saving Act of Faith to consist without the Habit of Faith, and makes the Habit of Faith to be on God's part of the Covenant of Grace: This will

will easily be cleared, by considering, that God works in and by Creatures, by giving and preserving in them Inclinations, which are the Principles of their Actings. No considerate Man dare say, that God cannot give an operative Inclination for one single Act, as well as for one Species of Acts, without which it were impossible to explicate his Dominion; and therefore he may well give the effectual Inclination to imbrace the Offer of Conversion, without giving the Habit for exerting all the Acts of Faith, which is no less a Christian Vertue or Grace than Love, or any other; and there is nothing can more clearly difference the saving Act of Faith from being an Act of Holiness, or a Work of the Law; yea, if any require the Accuracy of the Schools, they will find there is a Disposition differenced from an Habit.

This Objection doth also occur, that Acceptance of an Offer is no Act of believing, for which there is no ground. For the Acceptance must imply the sense of a Motion to repent or return, or to admit of Conversion, which is an Act of the Understanding, and is such an Act of Faith as is the believing the Scripture to be the Word of God; but the Acceptance implies also a Trust or relying upon God, that he will make good his Offer to the Person trusting.

This Difficulty did also offer it self to me, that this way of Salvation and of the Covenant of Grace, makes too much to depend upon the Creature. If all that do not reject the Offer of Conversion and Holiness be elected, Election is not so free as the Scripture holdeth it forth, and one Creature makes it self to differ from another; whereas the Scripture saith, *Who hath made thee to differ?*

differ? There is a necessity either to refuse or to choose; and if there can be a middle Condition between refusing and choosing, there is no Warrant to make such Difference between refusing and not refusing. I thank God that hath fully cleared me in all these: for as to God's Freedom in Election it is not incroached upon by his acting like himself, he was under no Obligation or Necessity to have elected or recovered any of the Race of fallen *Adam*; but to manifest the exceeding abundance of the Riches of his Grace, he did freely elect all that with Congruity to his Nature were eligible, rejecting none but those that would refuse his Offer, and not all those, but prevailing by the superabundance of his Grace against the Resistance of some of those, especially upon his Kindness to their Fathers. How often doth he shew Mercy to rebellious *Israel*, remembring *Abraham*, *Isaac* and *Jacob* his Servants, tho by many Generations distant from them? How much more the nearer Seed of his eminently faithful Servants, and yet freely: for these Fathers could not merit Happiness for themselves, much less for their Children; and the saying, *Who hath made thee to differ?* cannot be opposed to a Difference in a greater degree of Evil: For certainly he that sinneth against the Holy Ghost, makes himself so to differ from another obstinate Sinner; so that it can only be meant of doing any good and holy Deed in order to Salvation. That there is a middle State between accepting and rejecting any Offer, is without question: First, Negatively, by not noticing or considering it, which requires no positive Act. 2. By a positive Act, resolving to take it into Consideration presently, or at a convenient time; when

when there shall be most opportunity without Diversion to ponder it. 3. By inventing, collecting and comparing the Reasons and Motives on both parts, which in the most weighty Cases may require long Time, and much Deliberation. 4. By Irresolution, vacillating and doubting what is to be preferred. And lastly, by suspending the Resolution, or Choice, when yet there appears Reasons of Preference; and therefore God saith to the Church of *Thiathira* of *Jezebel*, *That he gave her space to repent of her Fornications, and she repented not.* There is nothing more clear and frequently inculcated in Scripture, than the attributing of the Misery and perishing of the Wicked to their refusing the Offer of Grace, or equivalent Expressions. And, (1.) There can nothing signify more Aversion to a motioned Offer, than not so much as to hear it; for those who see no probability of embracing, may yet hear Communing and Reasons: So it is said, *This evil People which refuseth to hear my Words, tho I have caused to cleave unto me the whole House of Israel, and the whole House of Judah, saith the Lord, that they might be unto me for a People, and for a Praise, and for a Glory; but they would not hear. They are turned back to the Iniquity of their Fore-fathers, who refused to hear my Words: They refused to hearken, and pulled away their Shoulder, and stopped their Ear that they should not hear: Yea, they made their Hearts as an Adamant Stone, lest they should hear the Law; therefore as I cried and they would not hear, so they cried and I will not hear, saith the Lord of Hosts. If they escaped not who refused him who spake on Earth, much more shall we not escape, if we turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven.* And as they rejected to hear the Word of God,

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so they rejected the Counsel of God, and they rejected his Statutes and Covenants that he made with their Fathers. Behold I will bring Evil upon this People, even the fruit of their Thoughts, because they have not hearkened unto my Words, nor to my Law, but rejected it. They have refused my Judgments and my Statutes; Therefore thus saith the Lord God, Behold I, even I am against thee, and will execute Judgment in the midst of thee. And the Lord said unto Moses, How long refuse ye to keep my Commandments, and my Laws? As they refused to hear, so they refused to know, through Deceit they refused to know me, saith the Lord. They refused to obey, neither were they mindful of thy Wonders that thou didst among them, but hardened their Necks. They do also refuse to come to God to be saved; Ye will not come, saith Christ, to me, that ye may be saved: Which is more than a meer Negative, for it is not a willing to come, but a willing not to come. They bold fast Deceit, they refuse to return; no Man repented him of his Wickedness, saying, What have I done? Every one turneth into his Course as the Horse rusheth into the Battel. Ye stiff-necked and uncircumcised in Heart and Ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost; as Jannes and Jambres withstood Moses, so do these also resist the Truth. Wherefore bath the Lord done this unto this great City? then they shall answer, because they have forsaken the Covenants of the Lord their God; they and our Fathers dealt proudly, hardened their Necks, and hearkened not to thy Commandments. They hardened their Necks, they did worse than their Fathers. This is a Nation that obeyeth not the Voice of the Lord their God, nor receiveth Correction. Behold I will bring upon this City, and upon all her Towns all the Evil that I have pronounced against it, because

because they have hardened their Necks that they might not hear my Words. Exhort one another while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the Deceitfulness of Sin. To day if you will hear his Voice barden not your Hearts. By these it is sufficiently evident that God's hardening Mens Hearts, is but by permission: Yea God saith of Israel, That they would have none of me. But there is no place more apposite and clear than that of the Psalmist; unto the wicked God saith, What hast thou to do to declare my Statutes, or that thou shouldst take my Covenant in thy Mouth, seeing thou hatest Instruction, and castest my Word behind thee? They hated to be reformed. The Soul of the wicked cleaveth to his abominable Things; and it is said of Jehoram that he cleaved to the Sins of Jeroboam the Son of Nebat. And Job saith of himself, If my Blot hath cleaved to my Hands, then let me sow and let another reap. And it is said of Ephraim, He is joined to Idols, let him alone. By which, and by all the former places, and many more, the not being brought into the Covenant is attributed to the positive Acts of Sinners against the Offer of Grace, and Means of it, whether by neglecting so great a Salvation, by refusing, or rejecting the Offer of it, but chiefly by contemning and despising of it: therefore it is said, Behold you Despisers, and wonder and perish! Christ explaining the Parable of the Sower, and why it is so much ineffectual, shows the Cause to be, That their Eyes have they closed, lest at any time they should see with their Eyes, and hear with their Ears, and should understand with their Hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them. Where they are active in closing their Eyes, but not in converting themselves, but therein they are passive

338 MEDITATION XVIII.

that they should be converted, and Christ active, *that I should heal them.* God Almighty convincing Job's Mistakes by a lively Voice, vindicateth not only his Power, but his Bounty and Justice, saying, *He striketh them as wicked Men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his Ways.*

The fourth Point proposed was, Whether the saving Act of Faith be only one individual Act, or if it require a Course or Continuation of the same, or the like Acts, or a Reiteration thereof? as to which I am perswaded it must be one single Act, receiving, imbracing, accepting, or assenting to the Spirit's inward Call to be willing to be converted from the Bondage of Sin, and from the Power of Satan, unto the Life and Liberty of the Children of God, which are the expresse Terms of the Commission to the Ministers of the Gospel, who can only give an outward Call, and there may be also an inward Call by the Conscience, both which may be resisted and refused; and in relation to these Calls, *many are called but few are chosen.* If the saving Act of Faith required a long Continuance or Reiteration, the Covenant of Grace could never be compleat till all these were performed: So that it behoved either to be but a conditional Covenant, which cannot consist with the Omniscience of God, the very nature of a Condition requiring Uncertainty, or otherways no Man could be in the Covenant of Grace till his last Breath. It is true, through the Ignorance or Doubtfulness of Believers, they frequently renew their Desire and Trust to be converted, thinking that they are but then to enter into the Covenant of Grace: But if they knew they were in it, it were not only a Folly, but

but a Fault, to desire that to be which already is. When the Soul saith, *Draw me and I will run after thee, Convert me and I shall be converted,* it doth import that it is not able to convert it self, but that God is able; nor doth it imply that as yet it is willing to be converted, which is indeed the converting Act, (unless by Conversion Regeneration be meant.) Common Experience teacheth that Men may be sensible of the Hardness of their Heart, and their unwillingness to part from their beloved Sins, and yet do know that God can make them willing in the Day of his Power.

Conversion and Regeneration, when accurately considered, are distinct, for Conversion is wrought by that Inclination given of God to accept the Offer of Grace, for thereby the Soul is no more addicted to Sin; but Regeneration is the Infusion of the Habits of Grace, the Pardon of Sin, Justification or holding of the Believer as Just, and thereby reconciling with him, and adopting him as a Son, which are God's Part of the Covenant of Grace, and are always done together; and the future Blessings of the Covenant, for increasing Grace, giving Perseverance, exciting Repentance, and renewing Pardon, Direction, Protection and Glory, are not Parts but Effects of the Covenant of Grace proceeding from God's Bounty and Faithfulness, and from his Engagement in the Covenant of Grace to give these things; which Promise is a Part of the New Covenant.

There is a great deal of Debate and Noise between divers Churches, and those of the same Church, in what Justification doth consist. And it is clear from comparing *Paul* and *James*, that there is a Justification before Men, and a Justifica-

tion before God: The former is but the Manifestation of Justification, the latter is the being of it, and this only is in God's Part of the Covenant of Grace; so that the Question is in what Justification before God consists. Some make it anterior to the Covenant of Grace with the Believer, and so no Part of it, but rather of that Covenant between the Persons of the Trinity, accounting the Elect as just Persons. Others hold Justification never to be till all Sin be purged, and so not before Death. Neither of these do agree with the golden Chain of Salvation, the Order of which is not without great Moment, wherein Foreknowledge is first, Predestination second, Vocation third, Justification fourth, and Glorification last. So that Justification is after Vocation, and before Glorification; and so it is one of the two Links in Time, Foreknowledge and Predestination being before Time, and Glorification being after every particular Believer's Time, when they are entred into Eternity. Yet even those who hold Justification to be in Time, and a Part of the Covenant of Grace, differ in their Conceptions of the Nature of it. Some hold it to differ nothing from the Forgiveness of Sin, to which I cannot agree; for then there behoved to be an Act of Justification whenever there is forgiveness of Sin, which is often to be repeated, and is a chief Article in the Lord's Prayer, which bearing *Give us this Day our daily Bread, and forgive us our Sins*, must at least import a Prayer for these every Day. By entering into the Covenant of Grace, future Sins are not forgiven before they be committed, which would be an Indulgence to Sin. The Church of *Rome* maketh Justification to be nothing else but Sanctification, which

which doth not consist with that golden Chain, where Sanctification is put as the End or Effect of Predestination: *For whom he foreknew, them he did predestinate to be conform to the Image of his Son.* That Conformity is Sanctity or Holiness, not only in conformity to the Holiness of God, which would not reach many Duties of Man's Holiness, but conformity to his Son God-Man, which comprehends them all. Others make Justification a judicial Act, whether before Time, after Time, or in Time; supposing God to charge a Man as a Criminal with the Guilt of his Sin, and that Christ for the Sinner, or he for himself pleaded Christ's Satisfaction, and thereupon God doth absolve: But I conceive there is no such pleading by Man at the Entrance of the Covenant of Grace, tho' virtually that Absolution be implied, but only his assenting to be converted, and to be made holy and happy. Therefore I conceive Justification to be God's holding and reputing the Believer to be as if he were intirely Just, notwithstanding the Remainders of Sin, seeing he is become an Adversary to Sin, and so may say with *Paul, Not I, but Sin that dwelleth in me.* In which Sense only it can be said, *That God seeth no Iniquity in Jacob, nor Sin in Israel; and that he that is born of God cannot Sin:* Seeing the indelible Habits of Grace do ever continue in him, which is called the Seed of God. Tho' forgiveness of Sins past at Regeneration purge him, and make him innocent, yet thereby alone he cannot be accounted Just, because the sinful Inclinations remain, yet may he be reputed as Just, seeing it is expressly said, *Happy is the Man to whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and whose Sin is covered.* It is an ordinary Expression that the Righteousness of Christ is

imputed to Believers, and that their Justification consisteth in that Imputation, because Christ is said to be our Righteousness, which is not a proper or accurate Expression, but improper and metonymick, whereby the Cause is put for the Effect, as Christ is also our Wisdom and our Peace, because he is the Cause of both. And likewise Faith is said to be imputed for Righteousness, which gave the Rise to that Error, that Faith as a good Work is accepted in place of intire Righteousness, and of all the good Works required for the fulfilling the Law. Whereas the Apostle in the Fourth of the *Romans* saith, *Abraham believed, and it was counted to him for Righteousness*: and Faith is counted for Righteousness to him that believeth on him that justifieth the Ungodly, but is not imputed to him as Righteousness; for the Original Word λογίζε-ται, now λογίζομαι, signifieth not to impute but to reckon, account, esteem or repute: And therefore Christ's Righteousness can no more properly be imputed as our Righteousness, than his Wisdom or his Peace can be our Wisdom or Peace, of which he is the Cause not the Effect; for if his fulfilling of the Law were our fulfilling of it, we needed not also fulfil the same, and the Antinomians would have too much to say that Believers are not obliged to fulfil the Law, which Christ fulfilled in their Place, and that all their good Works are only free Gratifications. Christ's Righteousness is no otherwise imputed to Believers than as a necessary Accomplishment of the second *Adam* coming in the Place of the first *Adam*, who if he had continued Righteous, would have made effectual the Covenant of Works which was lost by his Failure.

The

The fifth Point proposed will now easily be cleared, That the saving Act of Faith is not ordained to be Man's part of the Covenant of Grace, upon Consideration of its own Worth and Value, but as it relateth to, and relieth on the Mercy and Faithfulness of God, and the Merits and Satisfaction of Christ. It useth to be called the Eye of Faith looking to these, the Hand of Faith laying hold upon them, or the Instrument of the Soul, whereby it obtains Salvation. There are sharp Disputes under which of these Considerations it justifies; but I like it much better to be conceived only as the Manner which God hath freely chosen, whereby to communicate Grace and Glory to the Elect. I like it not to be called properly an Instrument, which is an inferiour Cause, having some Influence with the principal Agent; whereas God and Christ are the only Cause of Grace and Glory: Neither yet to be properly a Condition, upon which God is to give Grace and Glory, seeing a Condition must be uncertain to him who makes it a Condition. The being an Eye or Hand are certainly Metaphorical; without doubt *Causa*, *Conditio* & *Modus* are different. There is least to be attributed to the saving Act of Faith, as it is only the Manner how God is pleased to save, which is not a necessary Manner; for God might have exerted all his Dispensations with Creatures without giving them the Honour to enter into Covenant with him, and therefore he freely chose the way of a Covenant, and so the manner of it; and to magnify his free Grace, and to exclude all glorying of Man in himself, he hath chosen the manner of the Covenant of Grace, wherein there could not be less of Man in a Covenant. If God

had proceeded only by Mercy to save Men, there could have been no place for a Covenant, and Man had not been so much dealt with as a Rational Creature proceeding by Reason, Deliberation and Choice, as by a Covenant.

Hence way is made to the last Point proposed, What may be thought the Reason why God chose an Act of Faith, rather than any other Act of Man, to be Man's part in the Covenant of Grace? wherein there needs no other Reason, but the free Arbitrary Choice of God; yet tho the matter had been indifferent, his Wisdom appeareth much in this Choice, and his Goodness also, that he would honour Man to contract with him, and to take his Consent to that, and yet to give him no Cause, and even no Pretext to glory in himself. If any Person did obtain great things from another freely, which he knew he expected from him, and were futable to the one to give, and the other to get; Could he without the highest Ingratitude and Impudence, attribute the Gift to his own Hope, and not wholly to the Goodness and Faithfulness of the Giver? The Faithfulness of God is the chief Perfection exerted in the Covenant of Grace. The Object of Mercy is Misery, the Object of Faithfulness is a rational Hope or Trust, which is far larger than Mercy, and is extended to innocent Creatures, who were never miserable.

This way of the Explication of the Covenant of Grace, gives an easy Outgate to that bitter Contest in the Protestant Church of *France*, and elsewhere, whether only the active, or also the passive Obedience of Christ were imputed by the Covenant of Grace. As the Controversy was stated, the Arguments on either side were hardly solvable;

ble; for it was stated thus, Whether Christ in his Sufferings stood in the place of Man; or, if he did also stand in his place in his Acts of Holiness? The former was granted by both, the latter affirmed by the one, and denied by the other. The main Reason for the Affirmative was, That suffering could do no more than satisfy the Guilt of Sin, and so could only bring Man to be free of Misery and Torment, in which case *Adam* was before the Fall, but could not raise Man from that Animal State, being so much common with Brutes, to an Angelical State in Heaven, and yet that is frequently attributed to Christ. Therefore it behoved to be the Merit of Christ, not by his Sufferings, but by his Holiness; as *Adam* would have merited Heaven for himself and his Posterity, by his good Works, as of Debt, not of Grace; *For to him that worketh the Reward is not reckoned of Grace, but of Debt*: so that Christ paid the Debt of the Elect, and so advanceth them unto Glory. And on the other part, the chief Reason was, that Christ by his Human Nature being a Creature, was under an indispensable Obligation to the Creator, to love him with all his Soul, with all his Heart, and with all his Strength, beyond which there could be nothing, by which he did deserve all that Glory that no other was capable of; and therefore they could not conceive a Supererrogation in Christ's active Obedience, meriting the Heavenly Glory, which Merit was not only sufficient for the Elect, but for the whole Race of Mankind: altho it was free for the Son to become Man, his becoming Man was a part of his Humiliation and Suffering; and which is yet more pressing, if in that way the active Obedience and Holiness of Christ were imputed to the Elect,

Elect, they were thereby intirely holy, and their own Holiness were but Works of Supererrogation, at least were not Works due by Justice, but Works of Gratitude, and the failing in them could never require Repentance, which would agree to the Principles of none but of the Antinomians. Nor did it magnify the free Grace of God, if he gave nothing to the Elect in advancing them to Glory, but that which in Recompence, at least in Premiative Justice he was obliged to give: There being small ground in a Creditor to glory that he had exacted all he could have required, tho not from his Debtor, but from an interposed Person. I have already cleared my Thoughts, that tho Christ's Satisfaction may by Resemblance be called the Payment of a Debt, yet properly it is not: Nor doth God crave Satisfaction as a Creditor, or is Sin expiated by God's taking Pleasure in the Misery of his Creature, to compensate the Displeasure he had in their Sin, seeing he declareth the contrary with so solemn an Asseveration, *As I live, saith the Lord, I delight not in the Death of a Sinner.* But the Satisfaction he requireth in Conformity to his Holiness, is the Vindication of his Purity, and of his infinite Aversion from Sin, as by his Justice he proportions the Suffering requisite for the Vindication, to the Sins deserving. Therefore upon the foresight of *Adam's* Fall, and thereby not only the loss of the Exaltation of himself and Posterity to Celestial Glory, but falling into a sinful State which no Creature could expiate, the Son did freely interpose to restore Mankind to what they had lost by *Adam*, and to vindicate the Purity of God by Sufferings of as much Value, as if all Mankind had been in eternal Misery; and by Christ's performing

ing what *Adam* was obliged to perform, by a full Implement of the whole Will and Law of God, and for that end assuming the Nature of Man. I have also cleared my Mind, that tho *Adam* had stood, he could not have merited that Exaltation which he and his Posterity were to have had by the first Covenant; for he might have continued innocent and sinless, without great Advances in Holiness: Can it then with any Reason be thought, that his so continuing did in any way of Justice and Merit purchase Glory for himself? and the Capacity of the like to all his Posterity, if they continued sinless during the time of their Trial? But tho innocent *Adam* was capable of Merit by improving the Holiness God gave him; yet so great a Reward as God promised him upon his Persistence, was not a Reward of meer Debt, but of Grace; so that only the Covenant of Grace is of meer Grace without any thing of Merit in the Elect. Therefore as Faith in the Covenant of Grace is only the Manner freely chosen of God; so Persistence in Obedience was the Manner freely chosen of God in the Covenant of Works.

So then, the clearest way of taking up the Covenant of Grace is, that Christ by his Humiliation and Suffering did so fully vindicate the Purity of God, and his Justice, that thereupon God might have forgiven the Sins of the whole World, and of every individual Man; and he did exclude none from Mercy, but malicious and obstinate Sinners, that rejected the Motions of Conversion, and the Offers of Grace, but did even include some of these; and that he advanced the Elect to Celestial Glory, upon Christ's entire fulfilling of his Law, being also as the Manner freely chosen for the Covenant

venant of Grace, as *Adam's* Performance was for the Covenant of Works: and so not only Christ's Passive Obedience is imputed to Believers, but his Active Obedience as the Terms of the Covenant; and so the exceeding superabundant Grace of the Goodness of God is manifested, not only in accepting the Expiation of Sin by a Mediator, but in giving to the Elect Glory freely, as a Reward by Grace and not of Debt, whereby the Difficulties on both Hands in the forementioned Controversy do evanish. If Christ's Sufferings had been properly a Payment of the Debt of Sin, it could have had no Effect in relation to the Reprobate, nor could they have been restored to a possibility of Salvation, nor could God complain of the Hardness of their Hearts: For if Christ had suffered as to pay the Debt of Sin, he could not have paid the Debt of those that were to perish, or else God had exacted that Debt of them which Christ had paid; nor should Christ have suffered more than what were sufficient to pay the Debt of the Elect only: whereas all agree that his Sufferings were sufficient for the Sins of the whole World; but being conceived as the Vindication of God's Aversion from Sin, he not only saved the Elect, but stopt the Mouths of the Reprobate and Damned, and made them inexcusable; so that their own Conscience will condemn them, and be their perpetual Tormentor, that they have thrown themselves into Hell when they might have escaped, if it had not been their own deserving fault. This way doth far more illustrate to my Soul the infinitely amiable Representation of God both in his Grace and his Justice, than any other way that I can apprehend, in which I am exceedingly con-

confirmed by that excellent Parallel of the first and second *Adam*, held so clearly forth to the *Romans* by the blessed Apostle of the Gentiles, saying, *Death reigned from Adam to Moses, even in them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's Transgression, who is the Figure (or Type) of him that was to come, that is, of Christ.* Where the similitude of *Adam's* Transgression distinguishing it from others is, that by it the whole Benefit of the Covenant was lost, not only to himself, but to all his Posterity: *For if through the Offence of one Man many be dead, much more the Grace of God, and the Gift by Grace, which is by one Man Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.* If then *Adam* was a Type of Christ, certainly it was not in that he sinned, and lost his Posterity, but in this that as if he had continued obedient to God, he had brought himself and his Posterity to Glory; and as his bringing them to Glory were not by Merit, but by fulfilling the Terms of the Covenant of Works, so Christ's bringing the Elect to Glory, is by fulfilling the whole Will of God, as his part of the Terms of the Covenant of Grace. The same Apostle to the *Corinthians* makes the Type and Parallel yet more clear: *For since by Man came Death, by Man came also the Resurrection of the dead: And so it is written, the first Man Adam was made a living Soul, the last Man Adam was made a quickning Spirit.* But seeing the second *Adam* not only performed the Terms of Salvation by Obedience, but hath expiated Sin by his Suffering; therefore it is said, *For this cause he is the Mediator of the New Testament, that by the means of Death for the Redemption of the Transgressions that were under the first Covenant, they which are called might receive*

ceive the Promise of Eternal Inheritance. Here the Transgressions that were under the first Covenant, must be meant of the accumulated Sins in the Fall, which were redeemed, repaired and restored by Christ the second *Adam's* fulfilling all Righteousness, and purging the Sins of the Elect. And again it is said, *Not as the Offence, so also is the free Gift.* Not as it was by one that sinned, so was the Gift; for the Judgment was by one to Condemnation, but the free Gift is of many Offences to Justification: where the Gift to *Adam* is said to be to Condemnation, not by the Intent, but by the Event, through his failing; whereas the second *Adam* could not fail in performing his Undertaking.

By this Explication of the Covenant of Grace, I find my Mind cleared and eased of these perplexing Difficulties about God's Decrees and Dispensations in the Salvation and Reprobation of his Rational Creatures, and about the Terms and Tenor both of the Covenant of Works, and of the Covenant of Grace.

The most learned and most accurate in all Churches and all Ways have been perplexed, in thinking how God would decree to reject, damn and eternally torment a great part of his Rational Creatures for that which was never in their Power to perform, much more without any cause on the Creatures part, but only by his meer Sovereignty, or that they were never in a possibility to have escaped eternal Misery: Or, that Christ the second *Adam* had not so far exceeded the first *Adam*, that as the first *Adam* might have preserved all his Posterity in a Capacity to be saved, if he had not fallen; so the second *Adam* should not at least

least have put all Mankind in a Capacity to be saved, and escape eternal Misery by the Covenant of Grace. And yet on the other hand, the Scripture is so plain and positive, that it is not in Man's Power to believe by a saving Faith, to be holy, or how it could consist with the Veracity and Sincerity of God to exhort and exhortate with Men to repent, believe and be holy, tho it were neither in the Power of the Elect or Reprobate to perform the same. Whereupon some found no Outgate, but by recurring to that Freedom that once was in *Adam*, and that a Creditor might press his Debitor to pay his Debt, tho the Debitor were not able to pay it: Would ever a rational Creditor exhort his Debitor to pay when he knew he were altogether insolent?

Hence it is that Pelagians, Semi-Pelagians, Lutherans, Arminians and Papists, have all run to a Freedom in Man's Will to perform the saving Acts, and many of them have held that Freedom essential to, and inseparable from the Will: And others have held that Freedom as a Purchase of Christ, giving that Capacity to all Mankind by their Birth, or to many of them by their Baptism. The Pelagians and Semi-Pelagians thought the Powers of Nature were sufficient without any Purchase of Christ as to that. The Lutherans and Arminians attribute it to a general Purchase of Christ to all Mankind, that they were in a Capacity to believe, to be holy, and to be saved by their Birth, or their Baptism; and the Papists hold the same by Baptism administered in that Church, and do condemn all others not so baptized.

What can be more useful, satisfying and quieting Mens Consciences in this matter, or more illustrating

illustrating the Wisdom and Justice of God, that to extricate these Difficulties, and to show the true way of reconciling these apparent Inconsistencies by the wonderful Wisdom of God? Showing that by the Covenant of Grace, all Men were to be in a Capacity to be saved, and none under the absolute necessity of inevitable Misery but through their own deserving fault, whereby the Damned shall eternally accuse themselves as the only Authors of their own Damnation; and the Glorified shall attribute it wholly to God that they are saved; and that it may be well consistent with the Veracity and Sincerity of God to exhort and expostulate with any, whether Elect or Reprobate, to repent, believe and to be holy.

All which to me is convincingly cleared, in that God sincerely offers to all that come to Discretion, by their natural Conscience, by his Word, or by the Motions of his Spirit, to give them the Grace of Repentance, Faith and Holiness, if they do not reject the Offer: And so he doth by all Expressions possible expostulate with them, why they will not hear and accept, but will reject that Offer, and so die and perish, which is seldom or never ascribed to any other Sin, but Misbelief, hardning the Heart, or rejecting the Counsel of God. All which may well consist without any Power in the Person to whom the Offer is made to perform these Duties by themselves, either by the Powers of Nature, or any universal Grace given in their Birth or Baptism. This will evidently appear, and the Consistency will be clear by several Examples.

First,

First; If a King should make a Proclamation of Pardon to all his Rebellious Subjects, if they did not reject it, might he not sincerely and warrantably expostulate with them if they did reject it? might he not exhort them to accept it? And yet nothing more evident than that they could not pardon themselves, or escape Condemnation, being guilty of Death, without that general Pardon.

Secondly; If a Person had in Despair drunk down Poison, a Physician comes and hath in his Hand an Antidote which he offers, and which the Patient, continuing in Despair, refuses to accept; May not this Physician, tho he knew the Patient were inflexible, exhort him to accept the Antidote, wherein he performeth a vertuous Act congruous to his Nature? If this Patient continue obstinate, were he not a Self-murderer? Could he excuse himself from being the Author of his own Death? If he should desire the Physician to put the Antidote in his own Hand, and in his Choice, that he might drink it, or throw it upon the ground, were it Prudence or Kindness in the Physician so to do? Yet nothing is more evident than that this Patient could not cure himself, and yet is inexcusable that he was not cured: For tho it was not in his Power to cure himself, yet it was in his Power not to hinder his Cure.

These Examples do abundantly show not only the Consistency, but the Wisdom of Divine Dispensations towards Mankind. All Men are poisoned with Sin; yet God convinces all that have the use of Reason, that they are Sinners, and yet he is merciful to Penitents, which is the first step

to the Covenant of Grace, wherein God will make farther Progress, unless the first Motions be rejected, which is much clearer as to those to whom the way of God's Dispensations is revealed and inculcated, and the Offer of Regeneration, Repentance and Faith sincerely made. Can any of these pretend that they have not Power to repent, or believe, seeing the All-sufficient Power of God is offered, if it be not rejected? and tho God foreknows that the Offer will be rejected, yet it is congruous to his gracious and benign Nature to exhort the Acceptance of it, and to expostulate for the wilful Rejection thereof; as he saith, *Turn ye, turn ye, why will ye die, O House of Israel!* As it were not becoming the Physician to put the Antidote in the obstinate Patient's Hand, knowing that he would pour it out and lose it: So it is not congruous to the Divine Wisdom to give universal Grace, knowing that most that were to receive it would throw it away.

There is indeed this difference between the Offer God the Physician of Souls makes, and the Offer of the Antidote by a Physician of the Body, that the Power of God is insuperable, and can overcome the strongest Aversion, and the most wilful Rejection of Sinners: And therefore even some of these are in the Election of Grace, but that it is not congruous to his glorious Nature to exercise his Power upon all. This is evident, because he applieth it to none who sin against the Holy Ghost, who having tasted of the Powers of the World to come, do Despight unto the Spirit of God: Nor do any of his Divine Perfections incline him to overcome the Resistance of all

all other obstinate Sinners; and therefore God may justly say, *Behold ye Rejecters, and wonder, and perish!*

This way doth well quadrate with, and is much confirmed by the signal Sentence of the most universally applauded of all the Fathers, and the greatest Antipelagian *Augustine*, saying, *Deus neminem deserit nisi à quo prius deseritur*, God forsaketh none but those that first forsake him. This must import more than forgetting, neglecting, or not obeying God: It must imply an Application to God, and Consideration whether to cleave to Sin, or endeavour to return to him, with Consideration of a possibility of it, and an Offer of Mercy upon Repentance, and after all a rejecting of the Offer, and resolving not to repent, but to cleave to Sin, either absolutely, or for a time, as most do who leave Repentance to old Age, or Death-bed, that in the mean time they may enjoy their beloved Sins.

I shall conclude, with craving humble Pardon for what through the Weakness of my Capacity I have thought or said unsutably to the Infinite Perfections of my most glorious God; and with this Acknowledgment and Exaltation of the Bounty, Mercy, and Faithfulness of God towards Mankind, in the most profound Veneration, adore Him, saying,

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord God Almighty! Heaven and Earth are full of thy Glory, and of thy Grace, which thou freely and effectually givest to all Men capable of the Offer of Grace, who do not reject that Offer by sinning against the Holy Ghost, or cleaving

356 MEDITATION XVIII.

cleaving obstinately to their other known and predominant Sins, from which they refuse to be reclaimed; yet thou savest some of these by thy superabundant and insuperable Grace, pulling them as Firebrands out of the Fire. And all by the Merits and Mediation of thy only Son, our Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. To the Father, Son and Eternal Spirit, consubstantial in Personal Trinity, and individual Unity, be Glory eternally World without end. Amen.



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